



MOSTLY BOY

WILLIAM H. TOMPKINS





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'Twas where some old big bushes grew
We had our private interview.

MOSTLY BOY

BY
WILLIAM H. TOMPKINS

ILLUSTRATED WITH DRAWINGS BY
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DEDICATED TO
BOYS
OF ALL AGES, SIZES
AND SEXES

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MOSTLY BOY

OUR LOST BOYHOOD

Who wouldn't be a boy again,
For the length of a summer's day,
Could he throw his years to the four wide winds,
And play as he used to play!

Could he bury the load of his world-old cares
In the stream of idle joy,
And just for the length of a summer's day
Live the life of a careless boy;

Could he wander back along life's trail
To the old time swimming pool,
Where hot and tired he used to plunge
In its waters clear and cool;

Could he rise again with the song of the lark,
As the sun warm-flushed the dawn,
And roam once more the pathless woods
As he did in the days long gone;

Mostly Boy

Could he meet the boys he used to meet
In the same old carefree way,
And forget the lines the years have ploughed
And the hair long since turned grey;

Could he have one fight with Tubby or Bill
For the sake of the old-time joy,
A fight that left no after-sting
In the heart of a wholesome boy;

Could he find once more that trump of a girl
Whose hair was fiery red,
And feel the thrill of her chummy smile,
As he did in the years long dead;

Could he dream as only a boy can dream
Whose faith has the touch of gold,
When each new morn is a wonder-land
With its wonder tale untold;

Oh, who wouldn't be a boy once more,—
But alas, it can never be—
Except we defy the years' rough score
And are boys in sympathy!

“WHEN A FELLER NEEDS A FRIEND” I

When you have been to school all day
And haven't had no time to play,
But you have studied awful hard
And almost got a merit card;
And then you went straight home at night
Intendin' sure to make that kite,
So's you could have it all in tune
To fly next Sat'day afternoon;

And when you got in your backyard,
There's someone hollers awful hard,
“Here, Thomas, come right in the house,
And wash your face and change your blouse;
For Mrs. Jones has come to tea
And brought along her Marjory,
So Mama's man must entertain
Or Marjory won't come again.”

Just as you're feelin' like you'd cry,
There's Billy Brown comes sneakin' by,
And as you crawl upon the stoop
Around the house he gives a whoop,
And hollers in his coarsest tones,
“Oh Tommy's courtin' Margy Jones!”—
I tell you, you can just depend
That's when a feller needs a friend!

WHEN A FELLER HAS A FRIEND

A comin' home from school last night
I almost had a bully fight
With Billy Brown who lives next door,
(We'd had one 'bout a week before)
For he dast me and I dast him,
And shook our fists and got in trim,
When Tubby yelled, "There comes your
dad!"—
And we forgot what made us mad.

We had to act like friends, you see,
An' course we was; we always be;
'Fore we got home we'd fixed a date
For Sat'day mornin' long 'bout eight,
When sure as Christmas, rain or shine,
We'd take our poles and fishin' line,
A snack to eat, some worms for bait,
Then old Bass Creek we'd make for straight.

Mostly Boy

I went to bed 'thout bein' told,
So's Pa and Ma didn't have to scold;
Next mornin' long about sunrise
I sprung on Pa a big surprise
When I came stompin' down the hall
Before he'd started once to call;
And Pa said how it was just great
To have a son who wasn't late!

Then we sat down to buckwheat cakes
That Ma for breakfast always bakes.
I hustled through and then slipped out
To see what Billy was about.
I heard a whistle by the gate
And there was Billy and the bait;
So I skun out and got the pole
And then down through the back yard stole.

Just as we struck for old Bass Creek
We heard a step come soft and quick
On our back stoop, when someone said,
"Thought I saw Thomas in the shed."
We didn't wait to hear no more,
But hiked it straight for Bass Creek shore,—
Gee it was great, you just depend
To go a fishin' with your friend!

THANKSGIVING TIME

Just 'fore Thanksgivin' come this year,
I got to feelin' awful queer;
You see my Ma had baked an' baked,
Until she said her back just ached;
There was such piles of pie and cake
It simply made you keep awake
And wonder if she'd miss a crumb
If snigged just 'fore Thanksgivin' come.—

So I stole down the back stairway,
(The old moon shone like it was day)
And opened soft the pantry door,
And there they set on shelf an' floor!
I honest didn't 'tend to take
But just one piece of layer cake;
But one piece seemed so stingy small,
I didn't stop, but eat it all!

Mostly Boy

Then I crept back an' crawled in bed
And soon was sleepin' sound as lead.
Next mornin' 'fore it got real light
I dreamed I had an awful fight;
And when my eyes got open wide,
I'd such a pain in my right side,
I couldn't help but almost cry,
Till Pa come in and asked me why.

My case to Pa I had to state,
(I knew they'd find the empty plate)
Then Pa, he sent for old Doc Ford,
And when he come I was most floored;
But Tubby's Pa'd a knowin' smile,
And grinned an' said, "Some castor ile
I guess 'll fix the boy all right,
And mend for keeps his appetite."—

Thanksgivin' day at last was here
With all its loads of eatin' cheer;
And when the folks was bein' fed
I had to stay right in my bed;
I heard 'em laughin' all the while—
And I a tastin' castor ile!—
I tell you you can just depend
'Twas when a feller needs a friend!

“WHEN A FELLER NEEDS A FRIEND.” II

I missed some spelling words to-day,
And so the Teacher made me stay,
Just when I had to get away
For buildin' somethin' for our play.
The other kids 'cept me and One
Had got the plaguey lessons done;
The “one” was Margy Jones, and she
Was helpin' Teacher stay with me.

I'd wrote them words about a score
Until I couldn't write no more;
When Teacher suddin' raised her head
And looked at me, an' solemn said:
“Now Thomas if you've studied well
Miss Marjory may hear you spell.”
When I got up my knees so shook,
I couldn't scarcely hold a book.

Mostly Boy

Then I looked past the old black-board
And Billy Brown an' 'Tubby Ford
Was peekin' 'cross the window sill
And laffin' almost fit to kill!—
I was so mad that I was dumb,
So to my nose, I stuck my thumb;
When Teacher looked, I never knowed,
For first I heard was her explode;—

“Why Thomas Smith, insultin' wretch!
Marjory Jones, my ruler fetch!—
Now, sir, apologise to me,
And then you kiss poor Marjory!”
Me kiss that red-haired freckle face,
And them boys see my deep disgrace!
I tell you, you can just depend
That's when a feller needs a friend.

THE SEQUEL

When I went home from school that night,
I wasn't lookin' for no fight,
Nor company except my own,—
I asked just to be let alone.
I'd stood enough for one school day
And want a feelin' none too gay;
I only wanted to get fed,
And then sneak off upstairs to bed.

As I come by Doc Ford's front stoop,
There Tubby stood an' give a whoop;
"Hey, Tom, did Margy bite, when you——"
And then he skun right out of view.
But Tubby's fat an' stubbed his toe,
And I was on him 'fore you'd know;—
'Twas where some old big bushes grew
We had our private interview.

When I got home 'twas almost dark
But I was feelin' like a lark;
My blouse was torn 'most off my back,
But Tubby's eye was good an' black;
My nose was bleedin'; his was too,
'N he 'poligised 'fore I got through!
For one time you can just depend
I certain didn't need a friend.

WHEN PA SPEAKS

My Pa he said to me one day
When I was restin' from my play;—
“I wonder what your Dad would do
If the first time he spoke to you
You acted like you heard him speak,
And didn't wait almost a week
Before you even answered ‘What?’
But jumped right up like you was shot,
An' says, ‘Yes Father, here am I;
If I can help you let me try!’
I wonder what your Dad would do
If such a miracle come true?—
Or sposen' when your Mother asks
That you perform some triflin' tasks
Like washin' up or fetchin' wood
You'd pitch right in as a son should;
Or when you're told that it's struck nine
You'd point for bed in a bee-line,
Instead of sayin' in a pout,
‘Wait till I see how it comes out!’
Just what 'ud happen do you 'spose?”
I said, “The land o' goodness knows!”
Pa laughed an' kind o' shook his head,
An' said he guessed we'd all drop dead!

TALKIN' BACK

I don't see why, when kids like me
With Parunts sometimes disagree,
Or take a diff'rent point of view
From what their Teachers want 'em to,
I don't see why in such a case
They need make up an awful face
Just like they'd set down on a tack,
An' hollar out, "Stop talkin' back!"

When you're dead sure a thing is so
Why can't you say the thing you know,
Without your Parunts gettin' mad,
And tellin' how you're actin' bad?—
You ain't supposed to tell a lie,
An' yet you will if you just try
To say the thing they want you to,
An' you a knowin' it ain't true!

Why can't you argue with your Pop -
'Thout bein' told that you must stop?
Now grown-ups, they can jaw an' jaw,
Pretend they're layin' down the law,
An' make things gen'rally buzz and hum,
An' get so mad they're most struck dumb,
So's that their faces turn dead black,
An' they ain't told, "Stop talkin' back!"

MAKIN' NOISE

Sometimes when you feel special good
And act like what a live boy should,
You come a boundin' in the house
And sling your hat an' fling your blouse,
And never stop to clean your feet,
And almost bust the window seat,
Till your Ma says, "You awful boys,
For goodness sake, you quit that noise!"

Then when you're playin' good an' hard
At Injun out in your backyard
And start to make a grand attack
Upon a trapper's lonely shack,
Just as you give your wildest whoop,
Your Ma comes out on your back stoop,
An' says, a lookin' horrified,
You scairt her so she almost died.

Mostly Boy

And then at night when you come in,
An' maybe make a little din,
Just as your Pa starts in to read
'Bout growin' some new kind of seed,
He suddin' stops, lays down his book
And straight at you begins to look,
An' says the way Pas sometime talk,
"Less noise, or straight to bed you walk!"

Folks act as if they thought that boys
Hain't got no right to make a noise,
An' never ought to shout or race,
But be like mummies in a case;
And so they scold or make a howl
If you ain't still as a stuffed owl!—
I wonder why God put in springs
Unless He meant you'd use the things?

ENGLISH LITERATURE

The grandest book I just got read
Last night before I went to bed;
It's better than Arabian Nights
'Cause it's jammed full of thrillin' fights
With bloody Injuns way out West
Who stole a white girl from her nest,
And killed her folks an' all the rest,
An' then ran off like all possest.

Her lover he collects his band,
An' says he'll lick 'em single hand;
Then night and day they madly ride
Until they find out where they hide;
An' then there is an ambushade,
Where the brave lover is waylaid;
But he quick jumps behind a rock
An' shoots most all the Injun flock.

Mostly Boy

I tell you it was simply great,
'N I didn't know it got so late,
Till Pa looked up surprised, an' said,
"Good gracious, Son, ain't you in bed?
I told you 'bout an' hour ago;
What lessons is it keeps you so?"
I said, "It's English literature;
You know I gotta pass for sure."

And Pa said, "Teachers ain't no sense
To make you pass at health's expense;
For health comes first, an' study last,
An' it don't count if you ain't past."
But when Pa saw me grinning, he
Half smelled a rat, an' says to me,
"Come here young man; I'll look at it!"
He looked just once, and says, "You git!"

SLANG

Our teachers are the queerest lot,
An' sometimes get just downright sot
'Bout doin' things no earthly good
For no blame reason 'cept you should;
The latest fad that they have got
Is one I think is just plain rot,—
"A chosen band who slang eschew,"
That's how they tell the stuff to you.

They have their meetin's once a week
Where all who join get up an' speak,
An' tell the rest how good they've done
A dodgin' slang which they should shun;
They've got a printed list of slang,
An' most the words have got a bang
That hits the nail right on the head
So when you're through you know it's said.

Of course I know it's wrong to swear,
But I don't think it's hardly square
When women teachers make a rule
How boys should talk when out of school;
If they don't know what things boys play
How can they tell what boys should say?
An' slang is made for such as that,
And's natch'rul as to stone a cat!

TEACHER'S PET

There is a kid comes to our school
Who never breaks a single rule,
At least when Teacher is around
Who always in his place is found
Right when the clock is strikin' nine,
An' has his lessons learned so fine
He's never missed a single word as yet,
An' so of course he's Teacher's Pet!

Sometimes she asks what we don't know
Then looks all up an' down the row
Till Algernon holds up his hand
When Teacher smiles an' says so bland,
"I guess there's one boy in this class
Who studies hard, and sure will pass!"
Now Algernon you may recite
And show us how to do it right!"

Mostly Boy

Then Algy sings his little tune
An' swells up like a toy balloon
You want to prick an' see it burst,
An' would too if you only durst;
Then Teacher smiles some more again
An' struttin' like a peacock hen
She says she hopes her class will see
Just what each member ought to be.

Outsides we look a frosted lot,
But insides we are sissin' hot;
So when our lessons get just punk
That Algy's pop'lar as a skunk;
But skunks don't ever seem to know
Why 'tis that folks despise 'em so.
I never see no reason yet
Why you should be the Teacher's Pet.

'XAMINATION DAY

The sun is shinin' bright outside,
There ain't a cloud that's a foot wide,
And all the air is smellin' sweet
As the best things boys like to eat,
The teachers they just grin at you
Like that is all they've got to do;—
But I don't feel one bit that way
Because it's 'xamination day!

A robin 's singin' in the tree—
But that ain't nothin' now to me;
The woods are like one big bouquet—
But I ain't walkin' now that way;
Some boys are out a playin' ball—
But that don't int'rest me at all;—
For I ain't feelin' one bit gay,
Because it's 'xamination day!

Ma said we'd have short-cake to-night,
But I ain't got no appetite;
When Tubby shook his fist at me,
I just pretended not to see;
An' then when Margy tried to smile,
I looked like takin' castor ile;—
All 'cause it's 'xamination day,
An' that explains all I now say.

VACATION TIME

I don't see why that mothers call
Just when boys start a game of ball,
And make 'em miss their turn to bat
Right in the middle of "old cat;"
And when you're busy's you can be
A buildin' 'portant things for me
Why fathers hollar out your name
An' make you feel a sense of shame.

This morning while in our backyard
A working fast and awful hard,
They stopped my doing any more
To send me to the grocery store,
Just for a lot of useless things
Like what a feller always brings
When there's a snag of company
An' Ma is fixin' up for tea.

Mostly Boy

'Bout noon while mendin' my best cart,
(You see I'd snigged a big ole tart
So I wa'n't hungry for a spell)
They rung an' rung the dinner bell;
An' just because I didn't stop
They all got mad as the old hop,
And said the soup would get all cold
And that my pa he'd up an' scold!

Well I come in and washed me quick
An' thought I looked for me right slick;
But when I took my proper place
My mother said, "Son wash your face,
And when you wash this time I hope
You won't be 'fraid to use some soap!"
I wish the man who first made soap
Just had to eat the nasty dope!

Right after supper, 'fore it's dark,
When having just the grandest lark,
They up an' calls three times they said,
And tells me I must go to bed;—
But when I'm cleaned and all undrest,
Then Mother says she loves me best,
And Daddy takes me on his knee;—
I guess they ain't so bad to me
Vacation time!

HUNTIN' THE TURKEY'S NEST

The fun I like 'bove all the rest
Is huntin' the old turkey's nest;
It comes about the first of May
When our old turkey starts to lay,
And goes off by herself to hide
From cacklin' hens she can't abide,
An' I expec' the gobbler too
Annoys her with his hullybaloo.

One day at breakfast, my Pa said:
"I've noticed when the hens I've fed
Our old hen turkey wasn't there;
I couldn't see her round no where,
I'll bet she's stole her nest again;
A sly old gal is that old hen!
Now Thomas, I depend on you
To find that nest where she's gone to."

Mostly Boy

So I went out to the barnyard
Where all the hens was cacklin' hard,
An' there she was peckin' away
Like that was all she'd do that day;
The gobbler was a struttin' roun'
Just like the biggest dude in town,
An' takin' most especial pains
To show the world he had no brains.

And while I watched an hour or two,
She didn't once get out of view;
So I went in to get a bite,
When I got back, she wan't in sight;
I squinted thro' the old fence rail,
An' saw the tip of her old tail
Just scootin' for our slashin' lot;
You bet I followed quick an' hot.

When I got back at home that night
I was most hungry 'nough to fight;
But I had found the nest at last
In an old stump I four times passed.
At supper time when I told Dad,
He laughed an' said that he was glad,
For he remembers when a kid
He done the very things I did.

GETTIN' THE COWS

When I get home from school at night,
My Pa calls as I heave in sight:—
“Hey, Tom, it’s time the cows was got,
’Cause they’re turned down in the back lot.”
I sing, “All right!” then slide in where
Ma’s cake jar’s hid behind the stair;
You see a boy who’s been to school
Comes home plum empty as a rule.

Soon’s I get fixed that awful ache
With the best cookies Ma can bake,
An’ stuff a fat one in my face,
An’ grab two more just so in case
Them cows are out and I am late,
I sure won’t starve at any rate,
I make a dryish whistlin’ soun’
Till good old Rove most knocks me down.

Mostly Boy

Then Rove he gives a knowin' bark
Like he was ready for a lark,
And off we start down our back lane
A racin' like a railroad train;
It's most a mile or maybe two
'Fore our back lot comes into view;
So course we don't run all the way,
But stop sometimes to look an' play.

I'll bet there ain't a grander spot
Most anywhere than our back lot;—
An old burnt slashin' 'cross one end,
While old Bass Creek slips round the bend;
A grove of hick'ries on one side,
Old shag-barks where the squirrels hide,
An' then the back butts up Coon hill,
With woods all over, thick an' still.

Just think of all a boy can find.
If he's got eyes an' ain't stone blind;—
The squirrels scootin' up the trees,
All sorts of birds as thick as bees,
A rabbit's fluffy tail an' head,
A fox that's just a streak of red,
And then a partridge with a whiz
Pops up almost right where he is.

Mostly Boy

Why you can have the grandest lark
And hunt an' hunt till it's plum dark,
Espech'ly when your good old dog
Has treed a chipmunk in a log;
You clean forget for what you've come
An' don't think once of cows or hum,
Until you sort of feel a calm—
And your fond Parunt hollars, "Tom!"

I jumped like I had just woke up,
An' pert nigh scairt to death my pup,
Then almost 'fore we'd scarce begun,
We had them old cows on the run,
While I was thinkin' might an' main
Some good excuse that would explain
Just how it took two hours or more
For me an' Rove to do one chore!

TRAMPIN'

My Pa, he likes to tramp with me;
He says that trampin's his idea
Of what is the best brand of fun,
Where you don't need to take a gun
For you ain't bent on killin' things
That runs or flies, or swims or sings;
You'd rather see 'em live and play
An' hear 'em sing some other day.

An' then Pa says he likes to take
Some youngster 'long that's wide awake,
(That's me) to cultivate his eyes,
An' train his ears, an' make him wise
In woodcraft things boys ought to know,
So's he can tell tracks made in snow,
Know trees an' flowers from how they look,
An' read, as Pa says, Nature's book.

Mostly Boy

You ought to see Pa paw around
Until his old pet cap is found;
And then I fetch his hick'ry cane,
The one we cut back in the lane,
An' get our sweaters, his an' mine,
My oldest shoes that's lost their shine,
Some sandwiches, an' pie an' cake,
An' the best cookies Ma can bake.

Then when we get all toggged up slick
We call to Ma to come out quick;
She comes an' looks us up an' down,
An' asks if it's a tramp or clown;
She's sure it ain't no relative
At least with who she'd want to live;
And then she laughs an' shakes her head
An' hopes her tramps will sure be fed.

Then we start off at double quick
A headin' straight for old Bass Creek;
Though we don't hurry all the time,
Espech'ly when a hill we climb;—
But dinner time I like the best
When we just eat an' talk an' rest;
Time we get back, I'm most tired out,
But Pa calls me a first class scout!

PUTTERIN' 'ROUND

My Pa, he says I putter 'round
Until it makes him tired, he's bound;
He says it takes for me to dress
'Nough time for two small boys, he guess,
That is on mornings when school is;
But when school ain't, an' I have biz,
A buildin' somethin' that will run
I'm dressed almost 'fore I've begun.

He says when he tells me to hoe,
Say for about an hour or so,
Out in our patch where 'taters grow,
That he would really like to know
What is it takes so awful long
Before I'm out where I belong;
An' why I hunt through the whole house
To find where is my workin' blouse.

Mostly Boy

He says he knows I can be spry,
For if some kid a goin' by
Just hollers, "Rah for ball!" why that
I'd find my coat an' old straw hat
'Fore you'd have time to holler "scat!"
He don't know what to make of that,
Unless it is a spring complaint
That some folks have and others hain't.

So when Doc Ford come by our road
My Pa he asked Doc if he knowed
What ailed boys when they puttered so;
Now Doc jest laughed, and then said "No!"
But he suspec's he knows a cure,
However, he ain't yet dead sure,
Although it works on Tubby fine,
An' Tubby's case is worse than mine.

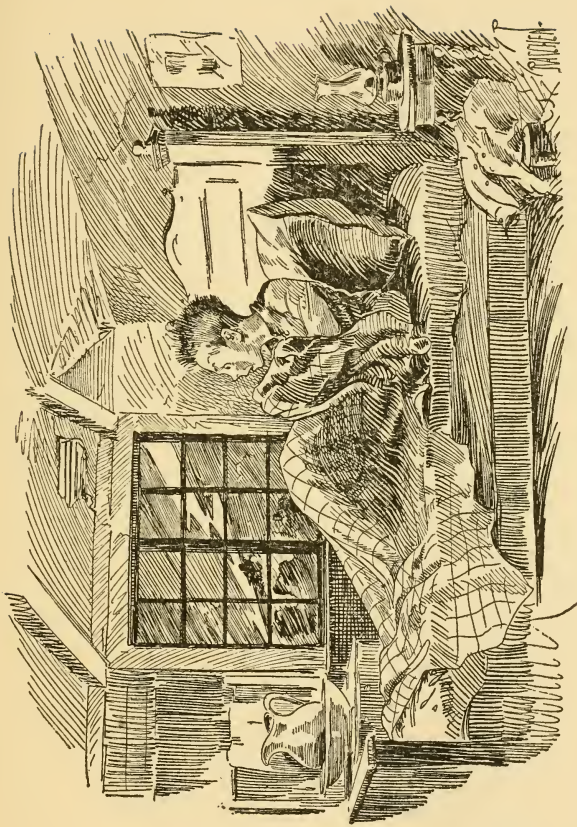
Doc says in April there's jinx
That makes in boys all sorts of kinks;
He thinks a maple pole, a line,
Some hooks, some worms, a mornin' fine
An' then a hike to old Bass Creek
Would cure most boys of bein' sick,
An' stop their putterin'—least a while;
Then Doc an' Pa just wink an' smile!

WHEN YOU FORGET

I wonder why it hurts you so
When you've done things your folks don't know,—
The things they said you must not do,
And they have gone and trusted you,
But you just kind of half forgot
And didn't think as like as not,
Until at last you went an' did
The very thing that they forbid!

It somehow hurts clean down inside,
And it don't help one bit to hide,
Because you know it sticks right there
A looking at you straight and square;
The more you try to just forget
The worse your inside feelin's get,
Until you just can't stand the pain
If something quick don't break the strain.

You know well 'nough there's just one thing
That every time will comfort bring,
An' that is when you go right straight
An' tell your folks, an' learn your fate;
Why you feel better just that quick
Like Doc Ford makes you when you're sick;
An' then you promise good an' fast
This time'll surely be the last!



MY HAIR JUST STANDS STRAIGHT ON MY HEAD

I AIN'T AFRAID—EXCEPT!

I'm gettin' so I ain't afraid
Of almost anything that's made,
If it's got two legs, or has four,
Not even if it's got some more;
When I was small an' it got dark
I didn't then dare have a lark,
With night a creepin' long the ground
An' makin' ghosts an' such all 'round.

I don't care now how late it's got,
I dast go through the old stump lot,
Where whip-poor-wills all lonesome cry,
An' hootin' owls go sailin' by,
An' stumps look like great monstrous bears
Or giants just come out their lairs;
An' I don't shake then scarce a mite—
Because I know it's stumps all right.

Mostly Boy

But there's one thing makes me feel queer,
Although it ain't what I call fear;
It's when you wake up quick at night
And your bedroom busts into light,
Then comes a suddin' thund'rin' roar,
And it gets black an' starts to pour,—
My hair just stands straight on my head
Until I crawl in my Pa's bed!

I ain't exactly scairt you know,
Though some folks like to call it so;
But when it acts like that you see
It's natch'rul I should like to be
Right next to Pa with the light lit;
Where I can see and not get hit;
Then I don't care how fierce it roars,
It can not beat Pa when he snores.

WHEN MY PA READS TO ME

My Pa, he reads to me at night
When I've been good an' acted right,
An' done my chores 'thout bein' told
So he nor Ma hain't got to scold,
An' I have come straight home from school
Which is my Father's strictest rule,
An' didn't get in any fight,—
Why then Pa reads to me at night.

So when the clock is strikin' eight
An' Pa remarks it's gettin' late,
I hustle quick to get undressed,
An' then make straight for my own nest,
An' hollar to the goodest Dad
That he can't find his little lad;
Then Pa comes smougin' all around
An' sniffs an' smouges till I'm found.

Mostly Boy

Then when he's tucked me good an' tight,
Pa pulls his rocker to the light,
An' finds my fav'rite book of rhymes
We've read I guess a hundred times,
Then sticks his feet out on a chair,
Clears out his throat, roughs up his hair,
An' then begins to read to me
The grandest tales you ever see.

I lie as still as I can be,
Till I forget that I am me,
Who ain't as yet but ten years old,
And dream I am a hunter bold
What licked a monstrous grizzly bear
An' saved a helpless maiden fair,
(I make believe it's Margy Jones)
Just 'fore the bear crushed all her bones.

Sometimes Pa reads what he has writ,
When I don't dast to move a bit,
An' yet the bed 'll shake an' shake,
Until Pa says, "What! You awake?"
Well you just shut them peepers tight."
Then kisses me an' says "Good-night."
I don't know what most boys would do
Without a Pa who reads to you.

BILLY'S SISTER'S BEAU

Billy's sister's got a beau,
You see 'twas Billy told me so,
An' then I helped investigate
One night when it was pretty late;
They've got a hammock by a tree
Where we've swung lots, Billy an' me;
If I should tell you what we see—
But I won't tell, No sir-ee!

Now Billy's sister's name is Kate,
She calls it "Kathryn" though, of late;
Now when we see the things we heard
We didn't dast to say a word;
But somethin' 'bout the hammock broke,
An' Billy 'n' I, we most did choke;
Then Kate an' him, they saw us there,
An' Kate grabbed Billy by the hair;

But Billy's grit an' didn't yell,
And we both promised not to tell;
Since then we've candy every day,
And we don't have one cent to pay;
You see it pays folks to be good
And not tell all the things they could;
It saves them lots of trouble, too.
I bet you're wishin' that you knew!

Mostly Boy

GIRLS

I don't like girls—most girls I mean,
They are so silly, soft and green;
If they get hurt the littlest bit
They never show a spark of grit,
But always run to Ma and cry
And act just like they're goin' to die!
I never could quite understand
Why girls are always in demand.

But some girls hain't like girls at all,
They run an' climb and never fall;
They're most as good as some boys be
And that's a lot you must agree.
I know a girl like what I said;
She's got red hair—but I like red,
An' freckles too, upon her face—
But freckles ain't no real disgrace.

One day whan she was goin' by,
That Tubby Ford, he had to cry:—
“Hey, Freckles, I say, Brick!”—
You bet he took it back right quick,
An' said he'd rather 'pologise
Than get a pair of fresh black eyes;
An' not insult, I made him swear,
A girl because she's got red hair!

BOYS vs. GIRLS

Now Margy Jones, who's got red hair
An' great big eyes that almost stare,
When she looks 'cross her seat at you
Till you can't guess what she's up to,
Likes boys, she says, ahead of girls;
Especially if they hain't got curls;
You see her hair don't curl a bit,
So natch'ly she don't care for it.

She says she knows boys ain't so clean,
And generally too, they ain't so mean;
She knows they like to play in dirt,
But she don't see why that should hurt;
They ain't so pretty by a sight,
An' too, they ain't half so perlite;
They never care how they are dressed—
And yet, somehow, she likes 'em best.

She knows they aint no honester,
An' yet she says they're diff'renter;
The diff'rentest thing in the whole earth
Is boys if one red cent they're worth!
I spose what Margy says is true—
'Cept that no boy I ever knew
Was diff'rent as a—you can guess,
Because it always wears a dress!

THE GOODY-GOODIES

I never see what sense there is
For folks to make their spechul biz,
An' keep a flingin' in your face
How little Johnnie won first place,
Right when they know that you was there
An' see he didn't win it square,
But you're supposed to grin an' smile
Like when you're takin' castor ile! Gosh!

An' aint it 'bout the worst of all
When old Miss Plumb drops in to call,
An' you come blunderin' in the house
Dress'd in your workin' pants an' blouse,
An' she starts praisin' Fauntleroy
As bein' such a model boy,
"A perfect little gentleman"
Till you just want to hollar "damn!"

An' then your teacher has to praise
Her precious girls' inspirin' ways,
Till ev'ry boy in the whole school
Knows he is just a common fool.
You feel just like you want to fight
When you've been preached at day an' night
'Bout bein' good like Sissy Pry
That you could lick an' not half try!

KISSING GAMES

I never could see anyway
Why girls most always want to play
The kind of games that when you miss
You pay a forfeit with a kiss;
If you ketch them or they ketch you
The first thing that you have to do
Is let them kiss you once or twice
An' you pretend you think it's nice.

When we was playin' in the yard
And I was it, an' runnin' hard
With Flossie White a chasin' me
She caught me 'fore I got home free;
Before I got a chance to speak
She'd kissed me twice right on each cheek;
The kids just howled; my face got red
An' I sure wished that I was dead.

But some girls aint like that a bit;
'Cause one day Margy Jones was it,
An' Billy Brown who can run fast
Chased Margy an' ketched her at last;
Bill kissed her once, an' would again
But she slapped him, mad as a hen;—
So kissin' games us boys don't play,
But stick to ball and pull-away.

WIPIN' DISHES

I tell you it ain't dignified
An' that it sort o' hurts your pride
When your Ma says, just when you got
To study up an' learn a lot
Of lessons that you mostly hate,
An' yet don't dare to let 'em wait
But buckle down hard as you can,
"The dishes Tom, are in the pan."

You feel almost like talkin' back,
And yank the towel off the rack,
Most tear in two your apron string
An' want to smash most every thing
Or drop a teacup on the floor—
When sudden opens the side door,
An' 'fore you rip your apron off,
Tub Ford walks in and starts to cough.

Mostly Boy

You'd like to swat him on the nose
For ketchin' you in wimmen's clothes
A doin' things what men don't do,
While he stands grinnin' there at you,
And while he grins, you madder get,
An' your Ma calls, "Ain't you done yet?"
While Tub sings out all unafraid,
"O Missus Smith, who is your maid?"—

While Tubby was a grinnin' yet
I grabbed that dish cloth swishing wet
An' give Tub Ford one stinging swat
Right square across his speakin' spot;
You bet that grin was washed clean through,
An' 'fore Tub had come fully to,
I was a streakin' down our lane
A trustin' that Ma would explain.—

Now wipin' dishes hurts your pride,
Besides it ain't half dignified.

MORE WIPIN' DISHES

One afternoon along this fall
I went with Ma to make a call
On Mrs. Jones, who's Margy's Ma;
'Bout supper time along come Pa,
An' Mrs. Jones, she made us stay
To supper, 'cause 'twas Pa's birthday;
Gee, but she sure knows how to bake—
Two kinds of pie and three of cake!

I set along by Margy so
Ma couldn't poke me with her toe
When Mrs. Jones was passin' cake,
An' course each kind I had to take
Or she would think it wasn't good
And then I'd be misunderstood;
Now Margy's Pa winked at my Dad,
While Ma got red like she was mad.

Mostly Boy

When we got done the grown up folk,
Why they went out to talk or smoke,
An' Mrs. Jones told Margy she
Could go out doors and play with me,
An' do the dishes afterward;
But Margy said it had occurred
To her 'twould be lots better fun
To have them dishes washed an' done.

Then Margy asked me if I could
Wipe dishes dry an' do it good;
I said I never had but I,
If she'd teach me would like to try;
So Margy got an apron and
In tying it, she got her hand
Mixed up somehow with one of mine—
Gee, how it tingled down my spine!

Then Margy she began to wash,
And I began to wipe, but gosh,
When I would start to take a cup
My fingers got all tangled up
With hers, and she would kind o' blush
And give my hand a little push,
An' say she never knew or see
Half such a clumsy boy as me!

Mostly Boy

Somehow it didn't make me mad
Like it was Tubby's sister Glad;
'Bout when we got 'em almost through
Our Pas an' Mas popped into view,
And Mrs. Jones said, "Ain't that fine!"
"Good gracious," said that Ma of mine,
"A wipin' cloth gives Tom a fit,
An' generally he sneaks out of it."

Then Pa give Mrs. Jones a wink
An' said so we all heard, "I think
They'll get along about as well
If we just say 'good by' a spell."
They went, an' Margy looked at me
An' giggled so that I could see
The cutest dimple in each cheek,
I guess I blushed, but didn't speak.

Now wipin' dishes ain't so bad—
Right when a lass helps out a lad!

BOYS' MAS

When I am feelin' awful bad
But don't quite want to tell my Dad,—
Like when my dog got sick an' died,
An' it hurt so I almost cried,
Till someone I just had to tell
To ease the achin' for a spell;
You bet there wa'n't no other place
Just like my Ma in such a case!

An' if I've had an accident,
When working I was so intent
The hammer slipped off on my thunb,
Until I made things almost hum,
It's Ma who knows just what to do,
For she can sympathize with you
An' feel the hurt before you tell,
An' that's more'n half to make it well.

Mostly Boy

When Margy Jones and I got mad
About some trouble that we had,
And she called me a "sissy sneak,"
An' I called her a "tomboy freak,"
And we both said we wouldn't speak,
An' didn't neither for a week,
Somehow my Ma, she seemed to know
Just like she's done it long ago!

I natch'ly think the world of Pa,
But there ain't no one quite like Ma;
There aint a hurt I ever had
When she kissed me felt half so bad;
If I could only be as good
As my Ma is, you bet I would!
I guess God knew what He's about
When he made Mas to help boys out!

THE MODEL BOY

I just don't like your model boy,
Your goody, goody mama's joy;
Who is polite an' lifts his hat,
Says, "please" an' "thank you" and all that;
Who never tore his pants or blouse
An' never hollars in the house;
Who never makes a rippin' noise
An' never plays with common boys!

I know just such a model boy;
His mama calls him "Fauntleroy!"
He's never been to school I guess,
But has what's called a governess;
His mother says, boys are so rude
Their common speech is really crude;
Her son must be a gentleman
According to the latest plan!

One day they called at my Pa's house,
An' Fauntleroy'd a brand new blouse
With a big collar white as snow,
And a red scarf tied in a bow;
His shoes were blacked like shiny coal,
'N his stockin's didn't have a hole;
He looked like he was goin' to church,
Or like a bird stuck on a perch.

Mostly Boy

Ma called to me, an' she did say,
"This little boy has come to play
With you, and Fauntleroy's his name.
I hope you'll teach him some nice game."
Then his Ma says, like teachers can,
"I trust you are a gentleman?"
And I says, "Yes'm," an' "Come on!"
And in a minute we was gone.

I whistled like an engineer
An' Billy Brown did prompt appear.
He looked at me, then at the kid,
An' winked, an' grinned an' pulled his lid.
I says, "I stump for Miller's pond!"
The kid then said; "I'm very fond
Of roaming through these meadows fair."
Bill cried, "Then beat it, if you dare!"

This pond was water over mud;
We made a raft as best we could;
Then all got on, an' poled her past
The hollar log, where she stuck fast;
Then Billy yelled, "Brave Piruts, jump!"
We did; but Faunty fell kerslump,
An' sunk in mud most out of sight;—
We pulled him out a howling fright!

We scraped an' scraped, we honest did,
From top to toe upon that kid;
The more we'd scrape, the worse he'd yell
That his fond Ma he'd surely tell.
It got so late we had to go;
So we marched back three in a row,
Until we got by our back gate,
When Billy said he couldn't wait.

So I come in by the side door,
A wishin' what must come was o'er;
His Ma an' mine was talkin' fast;
(I'd run that minute if I dast;)
For when she spied her precious freak,
She kinda gasped, then give a shriek:—
"You little wretch, what have you done
To almost kill my darling son?"

But when I tried to just explain,
That kid, he butted in again,
"Those wicked boys most drowned me dead!"
So I got sent straight up to bed,
'Thout no supper, 'n they had cake,
Two kinds, an' me in bed awake!—
'J you wonder I don't like your model boy,
Espech'lly if his name is "Fauntleroy!"



WE SCRAPED AN' SCRAPED, WE HONEST DID

THE CIRCUS

'Twas just about a week ago,
Us boys got up a dandy show;
We give it out in our old shed,
Whose insides we had painted red;
The trainer he was Billy Brown,
While Tubby Ford, he was the clown;
The circus manager was me,
So I had lots to do you see.

Th' menagerie was simply great;
Each cage we made out of a crate,
And painted red like our inside,
Except not all the paint was dried;
An' some stuck on our lion's tail
Which we washed off in our milk pail,—
I mean we tried to wash the paint
Until the lion most did faint.

We had a water buffalo
The biggest one in any show,
Come straight from foreign lands by boat;
('Twas Tubby Ford's old billy goat).
Our lion eat a man each day,
As regular as cows eat hay;
This give the girls a kind of chill
Until they seen 'twas my dog Bill.

Mostly Boy

We'd advertised our circus show
Till all the kids were wild to go;
Admission was just half a dime,
That is for boys, one at a time;
But girls we give free gratis pass,
You see they ain't a monied class,
An' then they do appreciate—
Lots better'n boys at any rate.

We got a lemon an' we made
A milk pail full of lemonade,
Which we sold for a cent a glass,
Till Billy Brown he tried to pass
Right where the pail had just been set,
An' course he got his trousers wet;
And after that it didn't sell
Some how or other half so well.

The show went off just slick an' brown
Until the last act by our clown,
Where Tubby stood upon his head
On top the paint keg of red lead.
Now Billy fixed the pedestal
Right plain in sight before 'em all,
And then he asked that model Boy
To aid his friends in spreadin' joy.

Mostly Boy

So Fauntleroy, he held the keg
While Tubby raised each kickin' leg,
Until he got most up—kerplunk!
His head right through that paint top sunk,
An' come down in the paint, kersplosh
On Faunty 'fore you'd say b'gosh!—
Then riot reigned in place of peace
And them girls gabbled just like geese.

The model Boy he couldn't tell
If he should swear or cry a spell,
While Tubby said it made him sick
An' he just knew 'twas Billy's trick;
And yet he couldn't help but laugh
At Faunty who looked like a calf
That's splashed all over red an' white!—
I tell you 'twas a bully sight!

But Margy Jones she got plum mad
And said it was too downright bad
To act so mean to Faunty there.
(I 'spose it set off her red hair)
Then Tubby laughed, and Margy she
Slapped Tubby twice 'fore he could flee!
Our circus ended suddin' here
Because our parunts did appear.

FIXIN' THE PICNIC

Last week, when Sunday School was done,
Us kids, we had a wad of fun;
'Twas when they took a vote to see
Where our picnic was goin' to be.
You'd never b'lieved 'twas Sunday School
The way some grown-ups broke the rule
'Bout talking loud and gettin' mad
An' callin' names that sounded bad.

The young folks, them what like to pair
Said Hunter's Lake was the place where
Our picnic this year ought to be,
Because it takes a day you see
When you go round by Bucksby's Mill
An' drive clean over Partridge Hill,
An' then you don't get home till dark,
Which gives the pairs a chance to spark.

Then Deacon Small he jumps up quick,
An' says, "By gum, there's old Bass Creek,
That ain't but just a mile away
So's it won't spoil but half a day."
The Deacon says it's downright sin
That church folks shouldn't indulge in,
When there is hayin' to be done,
To waste a whole day just in fun.

Mostly Boy

Then old Doc Ford got up and smiled
Just like he wa'n't the least bit riled,
An' said he seen most every day
The sin of pitchin' too much hay;
He said one pound of picnic fun
Was better med'cine than a ton
Of the best hay that ever grew,—
This made the Deacon fume and stew.

Miss Plumb she said it was a shame,
An' 'twas the parents who's to blame,
The brazen way some young folks planned
She couldn't nohow understand.
Then Billy's ma, who's meek an' good,
Said if Miss Plumb had understood,
She'd probably had another name—
But of course for that she wa'n't to blame.

Miss Plumb then got so turkey red
I thought she'd sure set fire her head,
I guess that something got her goat,
Because the Min'ster said we'd vote
Twixt Hunter's Lake and old Bass Creek,
So's everyone could have his pick.
You bet that Hunter's Lake won out—
Then how the young folks all did shout!

THE ORPHAN HOUSE

One day when I went to our town
With Tubby Ford and Billy Brown,
We all walked by the Orphan Place
Where they put boys and girls in case
Their Pas and Mas got sick an' died,
An' there ain't no one else beside
Who'll give 'em anything to eat
Or buy 'em shoes for their bare feet.

They've built a fence most ten feet high,
You couldn't climb nohow you'd try,
All round the place on every side,
An' all the gates were locked beside,
And there them Orphans have to stay,
Not only nights but all the day,
Cooped up like pigs inside a pen
A wishin' they was out again.

There wa'n't no woods that most boys like,
There wa'n't no hills where you could hike,
There wa'n't no creek nor swimmin' hole,
No place to use a fishin' pole,
No room where you could throw a ball
Nor play most any game at all;
The only thing them kids could do
Was just look through that fence at you!

I tell you it seemed mighty hard,
As us three kids looked in the yard,
An' see them Orphans locked in there—
An' us free as birds in the air;
Now if we grumble any more
Just 'cause we're asked to do a chore
When we're at play in our back lot,
'Twill be because we just forgot.

I don't see why it's right or fair
To shut them Orphans up in there,
When old Miss Plumb lives all alone
In her big house of brick an' stone;
An' Deacon Small, who prays so hard
Won't have a kid inside his yard!
I bet it makes God good and mad
When rich folks act so stingy bad!

When I told Margy what we see,
She said she'd help us set 'em free;
She said we'd smash that fence in two,
An' sneak them Orphans all right through,
Then when we'd burnt the house clean down
We'd take the Orphans all to town
And make the folks who hain't no kid
Be like the decent ones what did!

THE RAGGED BOY

There's a new boy come in our grade
Who ain't of anything afraid,
At least most anything that grows,
But he ain't much on style or clothes;
I guess he took what someone shed,
And it was them or stay in bed;
Where they ain't patched, they're mostly holes
From his old cap down to his soles.

The fellows had almost forgot
The scare-crow down in our back lot,
Till the first day he came to us,
An' when they see the little cuss,
His rags a flappin' to an' fro,
Why they just shouted, "Hey, you Crow!"
He kind o' grinned a sickly smile
Like when you're takin' caster ile.

Mostly Boy

Of course when school was out that night
He natch'ly had to run or fight;
He didn't run nor turn his back,
But faced 'em there right in his track;
Bob Green was bigger by a head
But "Crow" smashed him till his nose bled;
Gee, how the fellows stomped the snow
An' kep' a yellin' "Sick 'im, Crow!"

His name was David Childs, we found,
His folks was dead, and he was bound
By the Poor Man to Deacon Small
Who doesn't favor boys at all
'Cept he can make 'em work like sin
An' never cost a single pin;
That's why he come with ragged clothes
An' looked half starved and almost froze.

He come to school now every day
But never had no time to play
When school was out, but scuttled straight
Down toward old Deacon Small's front gate.
But he could spell an' parse an' write
An' diagram an' do it right;
The way he shot through 'rithmetic
Just made us other kids look sick!

Mostly Boy

One noon as we our grub did take,
Spare-rib, an' punkin pie an' cake,
Crow set a munchin' just plain bread,
When a smart Alec up an' said,
"I bet that Crow has clean forgot
How he ate out the poor-house pot!"—
For half a minute 'twas dead still,
Then you could feel a quakin' thrill—

As Margy Jones pitched from her seat,
Her eyes just blazin' a white heat,
An' 'cross the room she fairly shot
An' give Bob Green one stinging swat,
So he dropped like a lump of lead,
While Margy almost screamed an' said,
"You say them wicked things once more,
I'll stomp you through the schoolhouse floor!"

Then she flashed round like a wild cat
An' facing where we fellows sat,
She said, "You are a pretty show;
If ever you call David "Crow"
You'll get just what I gave Bob Green!"
Right then our teacher's form was seen
And it got still, but you can bet
Us fellows call him "David" yet!

SWIMMIN'

I wonder if some July day
When 'twas just right for boys to play,
You ever had a stunt to hoe
Potatoes planted in a row
Across a hundurd acre lot
Where the sun poured down scorching hot,
And you just hoed until you sweat
Your shirt so it was wringing wet;

And as you hoed your back did ache
Until you thought 'twould surely break;
An' then your hands got blistered so
That you could scarcely hold the hoe,
An' your throat got so crackin' dry
You thought that you would certain die,—
I wonder if you've been right there
When you felt like you'd cry or swear!



NOR STOP UNTIL YOU'D REACHED THE GOAL
AN' PLUNGED RIGHT IN TH' OLE SWIMMIN' HOLE

Mostly Boy

Then 'spose you knew that old Bass Creek
'Da swimmin' hole that was just slick
Right by a big old elm for shade
With a sand bed where you could wade
Until you reached the swimmin' spot,
An' it was only cross one lot,
An' then your chum called you to him
An' stumped you for a bully swim;

I wonder if in such a case
You'd stick an' hoe a faster pace,
Till like enough you'd faint an' drop—
A hero dead who wouldn't stop;
Or would you be a reg'lar boy
An' fling that hoe, and run for joy,
Nor stop until you'd reached the goal
An' plunged right in th' ole swimmin' hole?

I guess I ain't no hero yet;—
When I got home my hair was wet;
Pa looked at me, then at my hair,
An' said he guessed that Ma in there
Had kept my supper steamin' hot;
He 'sposed I'm hungry like as not,
'Cause when he was like me a kid
He'd done the very things I did!

GOIN' TO MILL

Sometimes Pa lets me go to mill
With a wheat grist, an' drive old Bill,
An' take my pole an' hook an' line,
Espech'ly when the day is fine,
An' stop for Tubby on the way
If we both promise not to stay,
But start home when the grindin's through
So we'll get back an' our chores do.

It's 'bout five miles to Bucksby's Mill
If you go 'round by Partridge Hill;
But when you get most to the pond
An' see the big woods just beyond,
An' watch the water rush and pour
Across the dam, an' hear it roar,
Then listen to the mill wheel's hum
You give a whoop because you've come.

Mostly Boy

Now while the grist is bein' ground
Both Tub an' me are always found
With pole an' line an' can of bait
A settin' on the spillway gate,
Just so our feet ain't gettin' wet,
And fishin' for dear life you bet,
With one eye peeled upon the bob
Contented with our present job.

And when the cork bobs out of sight
You know for sure you've got a bite;
A tinglin' thrill shoots down your spine
As you pull up your hook an' line,
A wonderin' if the fish'll stick
If you should jerk a mite too quick;
When clean behind you on the grass
You land a beauty of a bass!

Just when they're bitin' fast as fun
Old Bucksby yells the grist is done;
Of course it wouldn't ever do
To say the things what you'd like to;
So you haul in your fish an' pole
And say good-by to the old hole,
Then hustle 'round behind the mill
Where flickin' flies stands poor old Bill.

Mostly Boy

Oh, ain't it fun a goin' back
Along that windin' one-horse track
'Round Partridge Hill, and 'long the creek
Where the road sides are growed up thick,
An' you a thinkin' how them fish
Would look a smokin' on a dish,
And better how, when crisp an' brown
They'd smell an' taste when goin' down!

Tub always asks to stay with me
'Cause I have chores to do you see,
An' Tub why he can't just be beat
When there is lots of fish to eat;
It makes Pa smile to see how quick
We make that plate of fish look sick;
You bet it's great to go to mill
With Tub, a grist, our poles an' Bill!

PLAYIN' BALL

Us kids was playin' ball last night
Down by the house of old man Wright,
When Billy hit a stingin' fly,
An' Tubby let it slip right by,
Until it bounded like old Ned
And landed square in his flower-bed;
Bill didn't mean to hit so hard,
Or 'twouldn't lit in old Wright's yard.

We didn't know just what we'd do,
The ball, you see, was almost new,
So we drewed cuts to see which one
Should have the honor and the fun;
The shortest straw it fell to me
And Tub an' Bill just split with glee
Till I got mad an' to 'em said
'F they didn't quit I'd bust their head.

Mostly Boy

Then I marched down to old Wright's gate,
But he was watchin' an' come straight
A stompin' down his garden walk
And started in 'fore I could talk
A word to him. Gosh! he was hot,
An' said, "I seen the hull blame lot;
'N I'll put the bunch, each one an' all
Where you won't play your pesky ball!"

Then Tubby says, "Please Mister Wright—"
An' he says, "You skin out my sight;
If I ketch you inside this yard
I'll jug you rascals good an' hard!"
"But Mister Wright, your old red cow—"
"Dodrat her hide, is she out now?"
'Fore Tub could say that she was not
He'd started fast for his back lot.—

Then Bill crawled in and got the ball
While he was lookin' for old Doll;
He seen her 'fore we got away,
An' sighted Bill, an' hollared, "Hey!"
But we wa'n't waitin' to be fed
So didn't hear the rest he said;
But when we play ball now at night
You bet it ain't near old man Wright!

MORE SWIMMIN'

'Bout four it got so sizzling hot
You almost melted on the spot;
I'd weeded our old onion bed
Till I was feeling worse than dead,
Right out there in the blazin' sun,
An' had been since the clock struck one;
When Billy Brown come running quick
An' yells, "I stump for old Bass Creek!"

You bet it didn't take a year
For me and Bill to disappear
Down our back lane and 'cross the lot
Till down by old Bass Creek we got;
You talk about your high toned springs
An' stuff like what the poet sings,
I tell you that them things ain't in it
With old Bass Creek, not for one minute!

But say, you ought to seen us strip;
How buttons flew and shirt bands rip!
But I beat Billy half an ace,
An' headed for the deepest place;
Just as I blubbered to the top
Bill suddin' come to a dead stop,
An' give one screechin' Injun yell
Which froze my gizzard for a spell.

Mostly Boy

'Fore I could ask if he was hurt
He'd stuck his head into his shirt,
An' holdin' to his drawers tight,
Tore 'cross the lot with all his might;
When I climbed back where I could see
I just fell down and whooped in glee;
I guess 'twould been a diff'rent case
If Bill had ever seen my face.

About three feet ahead of Bill
Was Bob Green's dog we'd sworn to kill;
The pup had Bill's pants in his mouth
A headin' straight for home due south;
The way it run was simply swell,
While every jump Bill give a yell,
Till that pup looked a scairt jack rabbit,
With Bill for dear life tryin' to grab it.

Bill sure was grit and held his own,
Till his sore toe hit on a stone;
The race was ended suddin' there,
While Bill's right hand was full of hair
That once grew on the pup's stub tail.
Poor Bill just give a doleful wail
An' hobbled back to old Bass Creek,
A lookin' like he was plumb sick.

Mostly Boy

Of course I had to sympathize,
Also a safety scheme devise;
I said "now let's suppose that we
Was natives of the Injun sea,
What never wears such things as clothes,
But just dobs mud from head to toes;
Bill could an Injun chief pretend,—
I'd be his missionary friend.

This didn't seem to take with Bill,
Who kept a gettin' madder till
I says, "Your blame old shirt, I see
Must take the place your pants should be!"
Bill kicked, but kickin' didn't fetch his pants;
He see his shirt was his last chance
A gettin' home at any rate,
An' Bill wa'n't riskin' being late.

I helped Bill squeeze his legs in where
His arms had lots of room to spare,
An' then I tied the bottom part
Up round his chest, next to his heart;
Bill's face was solemn as an owl
While I felt I must bust or howl,
As our lane we went moggin' up
An' Bill a vowing vengeance on that pup!

SMOKIN'

Some fellows think it's great to smoke,
But you just bet it ain't no joke!
You see Bob Green stumped us to try;
He'd been a braggin' on the sly
How he had smoked for most a year
An' never felt the least bit queer;
He told what fun it was to swipe
His Dad's tobacco for his pipe.

One day when school let out at three
Bob give the sign to 'Tub an' me,
So our back lane we three sneaked through
To where the elder bushes grew;
Here Bob his handkerchief undone,
An' said, "Now fellers, for some fun!"
'Bout half the stuff spilt in the dirt
But Bob said that it didn't hurt.

Now Bob had only one clay pipe,
So we cut elders that were ripe,
And poked the pith out for a hole,
Then fixed a corn cob for a bowl;
Now when we got our pipes all made,
I was a feelin' some afraid,
But Bob said we must take a vow
An' swear he didn't teach us how.

Mostly Boy

That didn't seem exactly fair
But Tub said that he didn't care;
So Bob lit up his old pipe first
And puffed away like he would burst;
Then Tub stumped me to go ahead
An' said the oldest always led;
When I got my first taste of smoke
It seemed to me I'd dead sure choke.

But I kept puffin' short an' quick
And told the fellows 'twas just slick;
When Tub see how I did behave
He vowed that he was twice as brave.
I guess he swallowed his first puff,
'Cause that first one was just enough
To make his face turn kind of grey
An' Tub act like he'd faint away.

When we had smoked two pipes pert near,
Tub said his stomach felt so queer
Like it was tryin' to turn around
An' spill itself out on the ground.
I said I guessed we'd better go;
(You see I too was feelin' so)
'Cause we had chores to do at night
No matter 'f we wa'n't feelin' right.

Mostly Boy

So we all started to go back
But only Bob kept in the track,
While Tub an' me poked on behind
A actin' like we was resigned
To what we knew' as sure as fate
Was waitin' t'other side the gate,
But when we got to our barnyard
Bob lit for home a runnin' hard.

When I asked Tub if he'd come in,
He give a kind of sickly grin,
An' said he couldn't stay no more,
So I sneaked 'round to our back door,
A lookin' if my Pa was there,
But didn't see him anywhere;
When Ma see me, I was so weak
That I could scarcely walk or speak.

I said I guessed I'd go to bed
'S I didn't feel good in my head;
Ma looked at me and said "Come here!"
I sidled up a feelin' queer;
When I got close she got one whiff
An' then she started in to sniff,
An' cried, "Why child, what's this I smell?"
I said, "I ain't a feelin' well!"

Mostly Boy

Then Ma says, "You get straight to bed,
Soon's you have scrubbed your hands and head!"
I didn't wait to hear no more,
I wa'n't for arguin' on that score.
When I got washed and all undressed,
Ma come up stairs, and said she guessed
I'd want some supper, so she'd got
Some apple dumplin's, smokin' hot!

But when she set 'em by my side,
I got so sick I almost died,
An' yelled, "A pail! Gosh, get a pail!"
But 'fore Ma could get under sail,
My stomach turned a summersault;
I couldn't stop; 'n' it wa'n't my fault;—
Ma didn't laugh, but all the while
I see her keepin' down a smile.

About that time in come my Pop,
While Ma went down to get a mop,
And when she told him 'bout the muss,
I heard Pa say, "The little cuss!"
Then he come up to where I lay
And the first thing that Dad did say
Was "Tom, let's have another smoke!"—
But I tell you it wa'n't no joke!

THE NEW MINISTER

We've got a minister that's new;
The old one left things in a stew,
And went off somewheres else to preach—
I guess it's heathens he will teach;
He used to preach two hours and more,
And I tell you it was a bore
To sit and never move a pin
While he talked 'bout "original sin!"

Our new one ain't so very old
So Tubby's Ma my Mother told;
And he hain't got as yet no wife,
Though Tubby's Ma bet mine a knife
He'd have one if he staid a year,
Unless he's what some folks call queer.
She says that men folks all need wives
To straighten out their sinful lives.

Now he took tea with us one night;
I tell you Ma worked all her might
A gettin' things her very best,
An' got all tired 'fore she got dressed;
Of course I had to slick up, too,
An' comb my hair and black my shoe,
An' gen'rally to renovate
An' get as Pa says "up to date."

Mostly Boy

When I got dressed I took my hat
And Billy brought his ball an' bat;
We'd just got started at our play
When a man come from Bass Creek way;
He wore a huntin' flannel shirt,
And on his shoes was lots of dirt;
We didn't hardly dast to stir
When we saw 'twas the minister!

He swung his hat, an' said "Hello!"
An' laughed an' 'sposed he ought to know
What kids we was; he rather guessed
That Brown and Smith would fit us best;
An' then he asked if he could play
If he'd sure not get in our way;—
My, how he played! An' then he showed
A brand new curve that neither knowed!

Just when he'd promised he'd umpire
Next game we had, but not for hire,
Ma she come out all hot an' flushed,
An' when he seen her, how he blushed,
An' said he ought, he did suppose
To go right home an' change his clothes,
But Ma said no, that Pa had come
And he must feel he was to hum.

\ *Mostly Boy*

At supper time how he did eat,
Especially of chicken meat;
And when he took a second pile,
He smiled an' said he'd walked ten mile
An' found a growin' appetite.
Pa laughed an' said, "You bet, that's right!"
Then when we got to layer cake,
He said 'twas like his ma did make.

When he got through a bein' fed
Then he an' Pa they visited;
They talked 'bout growin' wheat an' hay;
How raisin' trotters didn't pay;
And then they spoke of politics
With all the sneakin' kinds of tricks,
And how if each should take a hand
'Twould be lots better for the land.

Now when he had to go away,
Pa still was urgin' him to stay;
Ma told him he must come again,
And he said sure, if she'd say when.
You bet I'm goin' to hear that man
Talk every Sunday if I can;
He makes you feel you want to win,
An' he don't mention "'riginal sin!"

BARNUM'S CIRCUS

When Barnum's Circus came to town
Most ev'ry feller to be foun'
Who lived inside of forty mile
Had been a plannin' the whole while
How he would fix it so he'd go
And see "Creation's Biggest Show;"
No matter if it shine or rain,
Because it might not come again.

Of all us boys there were just three,
Includin' Brown an' Tub an' me,
Who'd worked a week and more until
Each one had saved a dollar bill;
Now Billy Brown hoed weeds and sand
And raised some blisters on his hand;
Tub Ford beat all his mother's rugs,
While I just picked potatoe bugs.

It seemed as if that Circus day
Was 'bout a million years away;
But 'course it came at last all right,
Just when we had 'bout said "good night;"
And Billy Brown he staid with me
The night before it was to be;
We talked an' talked, until Pa said
He'd send Bill home to his own bed.

Mostly Boy

When we got up it wa'n't quite four,
But we could not sleep one wink more;
We dressed and slipped out our back way
Just as it was a gettin' day;
Then we went down to Tubby's yard
An' whooped for Tubby good an' hard;
In half a jerk out stuck his head,
Just like he'd tumbled off his bed.

We talked a while an' planned to meet
As soon as we three boys could eat;
It seemed as if Ma'd never get
Our breakfast on the table set;
I eat so fast that I was done
Before Pa had almost begun;
An' when he see that I was through
He says there was so much to do,

He guessed that there was lots of time
For me to earn another dime,
An' finish up them last four rows—
Or the bugs would, he did suppose.
It seemed just like my heart would stop
Until my Ma looked right at Pop,
An' said she guessed them bugs could go
Until we'd been an' seen the Show!

Mostly Boy

I give a whoopin' kiss to Ma,
An' would have give the same to Pa,
But he just looked an' said, "Now, Son,
You come straight home when the show's done!"
"Yes, sir!" I said, as I shot out
An' quick to Billy give a shout,
When 'long come Tubby on the run
And we were off to see the fun!

Though it was hot we didn't care,
An' never stopped till we got there
And found the place right where we staid
Until we see the big parade;
You talk about the County Fair,
The Fourth with all the G. A. R.—
Why double them and they ain't in it
With that parade, not for one minute!

When we had seen the whole parade
We got us all some lemonade,
Some bread with sausage in between,
And candy canes all red an' green;
Then we went to the circus ground
So we could have a look around,
For it wa'n't time yet to go in—
It was at two when 'twould begin.

Mostly Boy

A feller tried sell us a seat
That had, he said, the rest all beat,
For half what it cost him last night,
But you just bet we didn't bite.
It was some squeeze when we pushed in,
Though Bill and I are long an' thin,
But poor old Tub, he was so fat
He couldn't talk right after that.

When we got in we all three went
To find us seats in the big tent;
I never see such piles an' piles,
There must have been a hundred miles;
I bet 'twould take a million men
To fill 'em all, and even then
There would be lots of room to stand
For half the people in the land!

The folks poured in like swarmin' bees,
Till it filled up by slow degrees;
And then there was one awful blare
Like Gabriel's entire band was there;
When right in marched the whole array
That just clean took your breath away;
I never dreamed I'd live to see
Such thrillin' sights as did we three!

Mostly Boy

An' then the Show at last begun
With three whirlpools of joy an' fun;—
But it ain't fair to have three rings
An' just one head to see the things;
A feller needs three pair of eyes
To see just half of all that flies
Around so fast you miss the best
While lookin' where there ain't the rest.

I thought us boys knew how to ride;—
But gosh! I wouldn't dast have tried
One half the tricks done by some girls
I know was young, 'cause they had curls,
And didn't wear so many clothes
As most the girls that us boys knows;—
One looked like Margy quite a bit
Though I don't 'spose I should say it.

We boys have got a slick trapeze,
But when we see with what cool ease
Them acrobats did thrillin' feats
That froze you to them circus seats,
And made your hair stand straight an' tall
A fearin' that the feller'd fall,
I tell you just one rushing thrill
Was worth at least that dollar bill!

Mostly Boy

Right when we thought it wa'n't half through
It suddin' stopped 'thout more ado,
And all the folks they started out,
But we thought we'd just look about
An' see if we could join the Show;
When a policeman made us go
Out where the side shows was all round
For they 'bout covered the whole ground.

Then Tubby teased to go an' see
The sacred calf whose heads were three,
But ten cents was all he possessed,—
He'd spent for candy all the rest;
So we just got some ginger beer
That makes your head spin round so queer;
By this the sun was getting low,
And Billy said 'twas time to go.

I guess it was; for Tubby's shoe
Was hurtin' so (he'd got 'em new),
He took it off, then stubbed his toe,
You'd thought he'd died, he did yell so.
When we got home we was most dead
And hungry 'nough to eat just bread!
But if I could you bet I'd go
And see again that Barnum's show!

TATTOOIN'

It was Bob Green who showed us how,
An' we most had a bully row
Right on the start, because each one
Said he'd be first to have it done;
Of course it wa'n't till school let out,
When none the Teachers was about,
That we went back an' crawled inside
A window we had left untied.

Bob said it was his uncle who
Showed him just what you got to do;
Bob told he'd sailed a hundred times
Across the sea in all the climes
An' latitudes, an' torrid zones
Where cannibals most picked his bones
When shipwrecked on an Injun isle
Where he had staid the longest while.

Mostly Boy

There wa'n't a thing that lived or grew
But what his Uncle see or knew;
His back was a menagerie
With packs of beasts you never see,
His chest had records of each trip
An' one arm had a full rigged ship,
An' gosh, there wa'n't a spot, Bob said
But was tatooed, or strike me dead!

We then went over by the sink
An' got the diff'rent kinds of ink;
I got some black, an' Tub some blue,
While Bob the Teacher's desk poked through,
Until he found some dandy red,
An' red's the best of all, he said
To do a real artistic job,
Which was the biting test, said Bob.

For half an hour we argued
Who'd be the first to have it tried;
Then we drew cuts, an' Tub was it
An' strutted 'round like he would split,
An' then he asked if it would hurt;
Bob said, "Shut up; take off your shirt!"
He did; but at the first pen prick
Tub jumped, an' cried it made him sick.

Mostly Boy

That made the fellows howl an' laugh,
An' hollar out, "Don't be a calf!"
Tub flinched an' danced a fancy jig,
While Bob inked in a whopping pig,
Then underneath, he scratched in "Tub;"
Now Billy Brown was the next dub;
Bill stripped his sleeve; "Go to!" he said,
An' Bob tattooed a donkey's head.

My turn was next. I guess I shook
But didn't show it by a look;
Bob said my forehead would be fine
For somethin' in a fancy line;
So he worked in an Injun head
An' used the brightest kind of red;
At every jab of that old pen
I felt I'd yell if jabbed again.

'Fore Bob was done the ink was spilt
An' some the kids thought they was kilt.
We wanted all to tattoo Bob
Who said we'd do too bum a job;
Besides it was a gettin' dark
An' we must finish up our lark;—
'Fore we crawled out, each one had swore
A pirut's oath on our heart's core.

Mostly Boy

We then went home a thinkin' how
We might postpone a family row;
That night Tub's folks was at our house,
So Tub he had to change his blouse,
Then we come on, not talkin' much
For things were lookin' sort of dutch;
Tub said his back felt kind o' tart,
And my forehead began to smart.

We went in soft by the front door
An' tiptoed 'cross the kitchen sink
A wishin' soap would wash out ink;
I wet my hair an' spinked it down
Straight on my forehead from the crown;
Then Ma she must have heard us some,
For she called out for us to come.

The folks had started in to eat
As we slid in an' took our seat,
When Doc Ford said he was afraid
We worked too hard the way we staid,
Unless we loved our Teacher so
We couldn't bear to see her go;
Pa said for that we wa'n't to blame,
If Doc was us he'd do the same.

Mostly Boy

Doc laughed.—Ma said, "What fools men be
When they get old!" while Tub an' me
Was each a workin' on his plate
To make up for our bein' late;
Then Ma she looked where I was at
An' says, "What makes your hair so flat?"
Tub shook when I says, "I forget,
I guess I must 'a got it wet!"

I set my heel on Tub's sore toe,
While he tried not to hollar "Oh!"
Then Ma reached 'cross to where I set
(The chills just froze my spine, you bet!)
An' lifted up my good old hair,
An' for a minute did just stare,
Then cried, "Tom Smith, what have you done?
Why Doctor, just look at my son!"

I guess I got as red as ink,
But couldn't move nor eat nor think;
Ma says, "Why don't you talk; don't eat!"
And shook me almost off my seat;
Doc Ford now had a suddin' fit
An' laughed so hard he almost split,
Then turned to Tub an' says, "My son,
Just where was your tattooin' done?"

Mostly Boy

Poor Tubby he was struck stone dumb,
Well knowin' what was sure to come;
Then Doc to Mrs. Ford did state,
"I think you'd best investigate."
When they went out, Doc turned to Pa,
An' grinned an' says, "I bet Tom's Ma
Has clean forgot the time that she
Tattooed an' Injun head on me."

Ma said, "John Ford, you awful kid,
It wa'n't no Injun head I did!"
Then Mrs. Ford she give a knock,
An' called out Pa an' Ma an' Doc;
So I laid in some meat an' bread—
In case that I adjourned to bed;
When Pa an' Doc came back, Pa said
Ma wanted to disfect my head.

Time I got out there Mrs. Ford
Had made Tub's back a scrubbin' board;
Ma says, "Come here," and I was in it
I bet in less than half a minute;
Gee whiz! I never dreamed or knew
What washin' Mas an' soap could do!
Poor Tub an me, we bore it well,
'Cept once or twice we let a yell.

Mostly Boy

Now while those Mas of ours did rub
An' wash an' rinse, an' soap an' scrub,
We both could hear when they was still
Our Pas a laughin' fit to kill;
Then our Mas said they couldn't see
How grown up men such fools could be;
Then mine give me a jabbin' rub,
An' Mrs. Ford laid hard on 'Tub.

When they got done an' we was through,
We felt an' looked most awful blue,
An' 'Tub went home an' me to bed—
Though fortified with meat an' bread.
At school next day it was no joke
To take the slurs the kids did poke;
So put this in your fryin' pan—
I'd rather see than be a tattooed man!

MARGY JONES'S PARTY

That Margy Jones was twelve last week,
An' she an' me, we don't now speak;
She had a party then you see,
An' natch'ly she invited me;
She wrote a card in her best hand
A givin' me to understand
My presunts would be welcome there
And I should bring a lady fair.

Whatever'd she put that in for
Unless it was to start up war?
I never asked no girl 'fore then;
They'll know it too, 'f I do again!
I couldn't hardly eat that night,
An' Pa asked 'bout my appetite,
While Ma just shook her head, an' said,
She guess'd I'd better go to bed.

Mostly Boy

When Ma come up, I wa'n't undressed,
But she just said she kind o' guessed
It was about that Margy's note;
(You see I'd left it in my coat)
She had me name the girls I knew
And then to sort out one or two;
When there wa'n't one that I adored,
She thought I'd best ask Gladys Ford.

Now Gladys ain't like Tub one bit;
She's awful smart, an' she knows it;
She stands right at her classes' head—
While I'm the other end instead;
Now when I asked her if she'd go,
Her nose turned up, like she'd say "no,"
She didn't though, but said she guess
'F I'd be polite, she might say "yes!"

That night I put on my best clothes,
And Ma pinned on my coat a rose;
And then for Gladys I did call
To take her to that Margy's ball.
When I stepped up and rang the bell,
Doc Ford, he come an' said, "What—well!"
I asked if Gladys, she was in;
He said, "Why, sure, of course; come in!"

Mostly Boy

Then Gladys come dressed all in white,
At least she looked just shining bright;
Her Pa said, "Now, be home at ten,
Or Thomas here can't come again."
As we went down their front porch stoop,
Some fellow hollared with a whoop,
"Hey, Glad has got a brand new beau,
An' I can lick him with my toe!"

I knew where Tubby Ford was hid,
And Gladys knew I knew she did;
But we pretended not to hear,
Leastways we tried to not act queer;
It seemed a mile to Margy's ball,
'N I somehow couldn't talk at all;
Then she said when we reached the place:
"I hope you won't be a disgrace!"

I says: "You needn't worry, Glad!"
You see it made me good an' mad;
Then we went in, and I went where
The fellows was who had got there.
There Faunty was dressed like a dude;
But I'd told Ma I'd not be rude,
So all I says, was "Hello!" then
He says, "I speak to gentlemen!"

Now 'spose it had been your own case,
I bet you'd punched him in the face;
I only said, I didn't 'spose
That gentlemen dressed in women's clothes.—
Then we went down where was the folks
A playin' games an' tellin' jokes;
The games was such as girls can play,
But boys look soft to act that way.

'Twas 'bout an hour when Mrs. Jones
Called supper in her sweetest tones,
An' said each boy should find a mate
An' then escort her to her plate.
I made for Margy like a streak,
But 'fore I got a chance to speak,
That Fauntleroy sneaked in ahead,
And Margy's cheeks got flamin' red.

Then Gladys she began to pout,
But we marched with the others out
To where the tables was all set
With the best things you ever eat;
I'd cleaned my plate up only twice
When Gladys said it wasn't nice;
I told her 'twas how Tub got fat,
An' she could nohow answer that.

Mostly Boy

I eat till all the rest got done,
Then we went back to have some fun;
When Margy's Ma said we'd dance now,
But as for me I didn't know how,
Leastways not with a partner girl
Who'd skip an' hop an' jump an' whirl,
Until you got things in a mess
And like as not you tore her dress.

I tried it though with Gladys once
An' she made me feel like a dunce;
So I set by some boys like me
And made remarks on what we see;
But when I see the only boy
For Margy Jones was Fauntleroy,
I tell you what it made me sick,
I don't care if he did dance slick.

One time when they came waltzin' by
A laughin' till you'd thought they'd die,
Bob Green who set right next to me
Stuck out his foot 'fore you could see,
And Faunty tripped, and fell a sprawl,
An' then that kid began to bawl,
While Margy went down on him too,
And tore her dress which was brand new.

Mostly Boy

But she was up just like a streak
An' turned on me 'fore I could speak;
Her cheeks were redder than her hair,
And her eyes shone just like a pair
Of rockets that you shoot at night;
(Were she a boy, how she would fight!)
And what she said to me right then
I dassent put down with my pen.

And when I tried to just explain,
Her Ma she said that it was plain
That they had made a big mistake
A askin' some folks to partake,
A thinkin' they was gentlemen,
But it would not occur again.
Then Faunty up an' sniffin' cries,
That gentlemen apologize!

I just said; "'Gwan, you booby cat!"
An' started for my coat an' hat;
When I got 'round to say good night,
That Gladys wa'n't no where in sight,
I didn't weep for that not much,
I'd had enough for me of such.—
And now it's been almost a week
And Margy 'n I don't even speak!



SHE'D COME A WALKIN' BY OUR PLACE

MAKIN' UP

It seems as if it's been a year
That I've been feelin' kind o' queer;
I ain't been sick, and yet my heart
Would thump an' thump, and jerk an' start
Each time that Margy Jones I see—
Especially if she see me;
You know we didn't neither speak
For something more than a whole week.

She'd come a walkin' by our place
Her head stuck up, nor turn her face
To where I was a cuttin' grass;
'N I wouldn't look to see her pass;
I went to church, an' so did she;
She spoke to Ma, but not to me;
Then I asked Ma, who was the bird,
And asked so that Margy heard.

Mostly Boy

An' then her face it got so red
'Twas like her hair upon her head;
And she looked as she'd like to cry
But wouldn't while the folks was by;
And Ma pretended not to hear,
But kept on talkin' kind o' queer,
While I went out on the church green,
For somehow I was feelin' mean.

That afternoon I took a hike;
You see I felt uneasy like,
So I went down through Jones's lane,
And when I had turned back again,
There Margy was by their elm tree,
An' I saw her, an' she saw me;
I came right on, an' so did she,
Till she was square in front of me.

And then her eyes, they flashed as bright
As cat's eyes in the darkest night;
She cried, "You act just like you hate—"
An' I said, "Margy don't, now wait—"
She says: "I know it was Bob Green;
An' that I've acted hateful mean!"
An' I says, "But that Fauntleroy—"
She snapped, "I hate that sissy boy!"

Mostly Boy

Then she began to sob an' cry,
An' I was standin' so close by,
My arms somehow got 'round her there,
While she didn't seem to really care;
An' 'fore I knew, I'd kissed her cheek
Before she had a chance to speak;
Her sobbin' stopped, and for a while
I was plum scairt till she did smile.

So then I knew it was all right,
An' for a minute held her tight;
Then we explained, and we forgive
An' promised never while we live
To say another cruel thing;
Then she let me wear her gold ring,
And I let her take my best knife,
And promised we'd be chums for life!

HICK'RY NUTTIN'

We had a stingin' frost last night,
And all the ground was flashin' white
This mornin' when the sun's first rays
Made diamonds everywhere you'd gaze;
The maple leaves come rattlin' down
All red an' gold, an' green an' brown,
An' then the air got soft an' still
An' hazy like on Hick'ry Hill.

'Twas Sat'day, so us kids was free—
No jail to-day for them an' me;
Instead of school an' 'rithmetic
An' stuffy books that make you sick,
We'd have one rippin' grand old time
(I mean the fellows what could climb)
A nuttin' out on Hick'ry Hill,
An' shinnin' shag-barks fit to kill.

Mostly Boy

Soon's I got breakfast stowed away
An' done my chores without delay,
I hustled on my climbin' pants—
I wa'n't a goin' to take no chance
With my new school ones Ma just bought
On hick'ry stubs a gettin' caught,
Then got the oldest blouse I had
An' said good by to Ma an' Dad.

Right then I give our Injun whoop
An' Billy Brown bounced off his stoop,
When we for Tubby's pointed straight
An' found him waitin' at their gate;
Then Tubby's Pa says sober like,
"Now boys, you've got a lickin hike,
If you don't start, you'll be here yet!"
We kids just grinned, and said, "You bet!"

If you walk fast, now Hick'ry Hill
Is 'bout half way to Bucksby's Mill;
You turn right by the old stone bridge
Then point your nose for the big ridge;
An' Hick'ry Hill is so close by,
You couldn't miss it should you try;
There ain't no other place I know
Where such great whoppin' shag-barks grow.

Mostly Boy

When we got there I took some straws
So Tub an' Bill would have two draws,
To see who'd climb an' who would pick,
But Tub said climbin' made him sick,
An' he would rather paw around
Among the leaves upon the ground,
For he had better eyes to see
The nuts, than either Bill or me.

We said we knew that Tub's eyes
For seein' snaps would take first prize;
Tub grinned, an' we shinned up the trees
An' scraped the skin most off our knees;
But 'fore we got clean to the top
I bet we had six times to stop
An' rest our arms an' hang our legs
On hick'ry stubs like they was pegs.

Now when you got exactly where
The nuts were thick as rabbit hair,
'Twas really worth a million times
The skin you lost on fifty climbs;
To flop your leg right square across
A big old limb like 'twas a hoss,
Then hold on tight an just look 'round
An' if you dast, squint at the ground!

Now while we climb, 'Tub took a nap
An' dreamed he'd found his fav'rite snap;
Till Bill and I got under way
And a hot tune began to play
On every limb our poles could whack;
'Twas like it hit a cyclone's track,
An' 'bout a million nuts came down
Like hailstones plunkin' on the ground!

You bet that Tubby's nap was through
And that he found enough to do
A dodgin' nuts an' pickin' too
Until his face got black an' blue;
But we got tired an' had to quit
An' both come down to rest a bit;
So then we helped poor Tubby pick
For he complained of feelin' sick.

'Bout then we felt all emptylike,
You see we'd had a good long hike,
So Tubby said we'd vote to know
If we should pick or eat or go;
Now when the votin' was complete
Each vote said that we'd stay an' eat;
I bet you never knew or see
Such starvin' kids as were we three.

Mostly Boy

A jolly fire we started quick
Around an old dead hick'ry stick;
We'd brought potatoes, bread an' meat
For most a dozen boys to eat;
But time the taters got half done
We couldn't stay the eatin' fun;
So we fell to with all our might
An' eat up everything in sight.

Then we all thought we'd take a nap,
You see we didn't care a rap
'Bout pickin' nuts on our sore knees,
So we stretched out beneath the trees
An' watched the squirrels fuss an' jaw
Like we'd been breakin' squirrel law;
Bimeby it got most time to go
For the old sun was gettin' low.

We slung our sack of nuts across
A whippin' pole for our pack hoss,
An' then we marched home Injun file —
An' thought it was most fifty mile.—
I bet three kids most never had
A time that made 'em half so glad—
'Cept Circus day, or Christmas night
Or when you're holdin' some one tight!

WHEN OLD ROVE DIED

My dog got sick last Spring an' died,
An' I felt so that I most cried
An' didn't care if every thing
Went clean to smash the rest o' Spring;
I didn't go to school that day,
Pa said I could stay home an' play,
But I'd as soon have worked instead
With good old Rove a lyin' dead.

Ma made a spechul custard pie
T'I couldn't eat nohow I'd try;
It somehow seemed to sudden choke
Me so that I just gulped, then broke
Right down, an' acted almost like—
Why, when I was a little tike
An' bumped my head a good big rap
An' run an' climbed in my Ma's lap.

Mostly Boy

When school let out that day at night,
I was a keepin' out of sight,
But Billy Brown come sneakin' in
An' said he guessed he'd buy Rove's skin,
And get it tanned, an' speculate
By sellin' it to Sister Kate.—
Him speculate on my dog's hide!
You bet I'd fixed him if he'd tried.

Then Tubby Ford come blunderin' round
And said a bully plan he'd found;
We'd build a whoppin' big bonfire
Just like a reg'lar funeral pyre,
An' when it got a goin' great
Old Rove we'd take an' just cremate!
But Tub, he didn't say it twice,
For what he got wa'n't soft or nice.

That night my heart had such a pain,
When Margy Jones came down the lane,
And I went out as she went by,
An' Margy looked most like she'd cry,
Yet didn't though, but only said
How she had heard old Rove was dead,
And she just knew I must be crushed
Like she was when her doll got squashed.

Mostly Boy

'Course dolls ain't dogs, and girls ain't boys,
But feelin's ain't weighed just by noise;
So we went down by our back lot
An' Margy found a pretty spot
Where I dug out a little grave,
('Twas awful hard to keep up brave)
Right close beside our hick'ry grove,
An' there we buried poor old Rove.

Then Margy who was standin' by,
She sung a gospel hymn, while I
Said, "Now I lay me down to sleep;"
The shadows then had 'gun to creep
Across the sky that was all red,
So we went home, an' when she said
"Good-by," I couldn't make a noise.—
Some girls is better'n any boys!

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

I don't see why it is some days
Things go in only crooked ways;
It starts when you get up so late
You strike a mile a minute gait,
Your shoestrings break; you lose your blouse
Although you hunt through the whole house;
Of course your breakfast's got stone cold,
An' Pa an' Ma just jaw and scold.

Then when to school you're racin' fast,
The old bell rings, and you're the last;
You try to sneak down to your seat,
But stumble over Tubby's feet;
Of course the Teacher looks up quick
An' says in tones that make you sick:
"Now, Master Smith, you may remain
And your gross tardiness explain."

At recess you get in a fight
And have to stay again at night
Or 'pologize to the whole school
For breakin' Teacher's fightin' rule.
'Course any fellow'd rather stay
An' take ten lickin's every day,
Than to pretend you've turned a saint,
An' say you're sorry when you ain't.—

Mostly Boy

Pa said that mornin' 'fore I'd gone
Soon's I got home to mow the lawn;
When Teacher let me go that night
('N' I didn't promise not to fight)
Tub Ford was waitin' down the road
To tell a secret that he knowed,
How he had found an old crow's nest
What had a dozen eggs he guessed.

'Twas in the crotch of a dead beech
Where you could easy climb an' reach,
Way back in Deacon Small's wood lot,
An awful lonesome spooky spot;
'Course Tub an' me both headed straight
Down Miller's lane an' through the gate,
An' cross to fields before we got
Where was the Deacon's timber lot.

Tub most forgot where was the tree,
So we both hunted till we see
An old crow light on a dead limb
An' heard his wife caw up to him,
Like she was jawin' her old man—
Exactly like some women can.
There was the nest like Tub had said,
Right in the crotch, big as your head.

Mostly Boy

We then drew cuts to see which one
Should skim the cream off from the fun;
I beat, but Tub he didn't mind,
Tub shinned right up so close behind
That I most kicked him in the nose;
The way he yelled scairt them old crows,
Who flapped and screeched so in my face
That I could scarcely reach the place.

When I got up where I could see,
An' Tub had climbed 'longside of me,
I couldn't scarce believe my eyes
As I just gloated on our prize!
When gosh! there come a sudden yell
So we most lost our perch an' fell;—
"You pesky thieves, wait till I git
My hick'ry cane where you'll feel it!"

We looked an' see 'twas Deacon Small
(I don't see why we didn't fall)
A puffin' cross his timber lot
His face all red like he was hot;
I grabbed two eggs an' Tub the rest,
An' chucked 'em both inside my vest,
Then started down the old beech stub
While right behind come kickin' Tub.

Mostly Boy

The Deacon snarled, "You varmints, wait!"
But that just freshened up our gait;
I tried to slide, but my pants caught
(They were my school ones Ma just bought)
When I jerked loose, gee, how they tore—
They'd been in two just one inch more;
But I jumped quick clean down the tree,
And so did Tub, an' lit on me.

We didn't neither one remain
To feel the Deacon's hick'ry cane,
But scuttled out true Injun style
The Deacon yellin' all the while.
When I got home I was some joke—
You see them crows' eggs all had broke;
An' there stood Pa by the shop door
Just puttin' up his old lawn mower.

I guess I ain't called on to say
What happened next, or tell the way
I felt. 'Twas bad enough before,
Espech'ly when my trousers tore.—
I don't see why when things go wrong
It keeps right up the whole day long;
I wonder too, when boys are men
'F they make the same mistakes again?

THE SPEAKIN' BEE

Last week on Friday afternoon,
'Twas our last day of school in June,
We had a speakin' bee at school.
Don't I just hate that durn old fool
What first invented speakin' bees
Where all your folks an' the Trustees,
The preacher an' Doc Ford are there—
You would just cut it if you dare.

The blame old Teacher picked our class,
An' said she wouldn't let us pass
Till each one learned at least a page
An' spoke it, too, right from the stage;
What she give me you'd never guess—
'Twas Lincoln's Gettysburg address!
She said that statesmen always start
By learnin' some great speech by heart. Gosh!

Our class has Brown an' Tubby Ford,
(Tub's pa is on the Trustee board)
And Margy Jones an' Mabel Tree,
An' Thomas Junior Smith—that's me;
Bill Brown struck luck and hurt his side,
While Mabel's aunt took sick an' died;
That didn't leave but just us three,
Tub Ford an' Margy Jones an' me!

Mostly Boy

Tub Ford, he learned a rippin' speech,
And spoke it bully like a peach;
'Twas something 'bout, "Lend me your ears,
O Romans, friends, if you'd weep tears."
Now Margy's piece, it was a pearl
Writ by some Ella Wheeler girl;
Just how it went I couldn't state,
But she just spoke it simply great.

I studied my old piece each night
Till I could say it clear through right;
An' then when I would go to bed
'Twould keep a buzzin' in my head,
Sometimes I'd wake up with a start
A mumblin' through the toughest part;
At last the only thing I seemed to know
Was, "Four score, seven years ago!"

The speakin' bee was on at last,
(You bet I wished 'twas gone and past)
Most everybody's folks was there,
And our big room was jammed for fair;
Our class was planted on the stage,
And had to wait what seemed an age
Until the last Trustee come in
'Fore things were ready to begin.

Mostly Boy

Tub Ford was picked to lead us off;
This made the fellows hem an' cough,
But Tub just give a knowin' grin,
An' made his bow an' lit right in,
Then ploughed straight through like it was fun,
And 'fore you knew it he was done;
Then, gee! you ought to've seen 'em cheer,
While Tub got pink from ear to ear.

'Twas Margy Jones whose turn come next;
She looked sweet as a Christmas text
When she got up and curtsied low,
And walked right out contained an' slow;
You could hear drop the littlest pin
The minute Margy did begin;
But just the second she got through
The cheers split that old room in two.

Then I woke up; 'twas my turn now;
The sweat just poured out on my brow;
My head seemed one big leaden lump,
My heart was goin' on the jump,
I couldn't seem to move my legs
What felt like they was wooden pegs;
Then things went zippin' 'round an' 'round,
While I heard just a buzzin' sound.

Mostly Boy

The Teacher must have called on me,
I couldn't tell, but only see
A million eyes a shootin' straight,
An' sensed I got to meet my fate.
I got up on my feet somehow
An' made what folks took for a bow;
My tongue right then got so blame dry
I couldn't speak, nohow I'd try.

While I stood starin' at the school,
An' feelin' like a red hot fool,
Tub Ford he snickered right out loud
So's it was heard by the whole crowd;
(You bet I wished I'd stuck that tack
On his old chair 'fore he got back)
Then Margy whispered soft an' low,—
"Four score and seven years ago."

I could 'a' kissed Marg Jones right there,
'Cept I was 'fraid that she might care;
I just grabbed on an' waded through,
And most the visitors never knew;
When I got done they cheered for fair,
'N' I acted like I didn't care.—
But that's the last old Speakin' Bee
They'll ever work again on me!

WOOL UNDERWEAR

I bet you my wool underwear
Would make most anybody swear;
Last night was our first frost this year,
So Ma, who acts sometimes most queer,
When she heard me crawl out of bed
Come to the stairway door, an' said,
"I've put your flannel underwear
Right on the next to bottom stair."

I called right back when she said it,
That I wa'n't cold the littlest bit,
And I would wear my heavy blouse
An' stay all day right in the house;
I didn't need no underwear
All double lined with prickly hair!
Then she says: "Thomas, that's enough!"—
So I put on the old red stuff.

Mostly Boy

It didn't feel so awful bad
An' I forgot how I was mad,
'Cause when I started out for school
It really was a good bit cool;
And time I heard the old bell ring,
I never thought of the blame thing,
But scuttled in to take my seat
An' most fell over Tubby's feet.

Of course the Teacher had to see
An' blame it all right on to me;
(Whenever anything is done
She thinks right off I am the one.)
So she said I might occupy
The first row seat that was close by,
And next to where the old stove stood
That had a fire a goin' good.

Gee, pretty soon it got so hot
I bet there wa'n't a single spot
On my whole body anywhere
But prickled with that underwear;
I tried my level best to act
Like 'twas a dream, an' not a fact;
It wouldn't work nohow I'd try—
I had to scratch my back or die.

Mostly Boy

Right then the Teacher turned her head
And when she saw me dig she said:
“Why Thomas Smith, come here, right now—
What are you doing, anyhow?”
I said right back that “I don’t care,
If you had on wool underwear
An’ had to set where you’d most fry,
I bet you’d scratch your back or die!”

She acted ’s if she’d liked to smile
But didn’t dast to do so while
The school broke loose in a uproar
That shook the school books on the floor;
So she just scowled an awful frown
That made the kids all quiet down,
Then told me I could take my seat
If I’d take care not to repeat.

I didn’t wait a second bid
But what she said I dum quick did,
My face got red as my necktie
And I felt mad enough to cry;
I was just bilin’ through an’ through
At all the school and Teacher too;
I grit my teeth so’s I’d not swear
At them an’ my wool underwear.

SKATIN'!

I tell you skatin' is just slick
Down at the bend in old Bass Creek!
Soon's school lets out for home we head
An' hunt the eggs, an' get things fed;
An' maybe find a snack to eat,
Some punkin pie an' bread an' meat,
Then get our scarf an' straps an' skates—
Hooray, we're off with our schoolmates!

You see it froze last week for fair,
An' so the ice is just one glare,
Like a great pane of shinin' glass
That keeps a singin' when you pass
As light as birds where it ain't thick—
Provided that you do it quick;
Sometimes it cracks like it would break,
When shivers down your backbone quake.

By eight the moon is sailin' high,
A big round lamp hung in the sky;
The stars just shoot a million rays
Till the whole sky is all ablaze;
The ground is shinin' white with snow,
And the old wind forgets to blow,
A spooky magic fills the air
An' tingles from your toe to hair.

Mostly Boy

For maybe the first hour or so,
The fellows play at games, you know,
An' prob'ly have a rippin' race
Way up the creek an' back to place;
They hardly give the girls a look
Who act like they was clean forsook,
An' skate just aimless like around
Or sit in bunches on the ground.

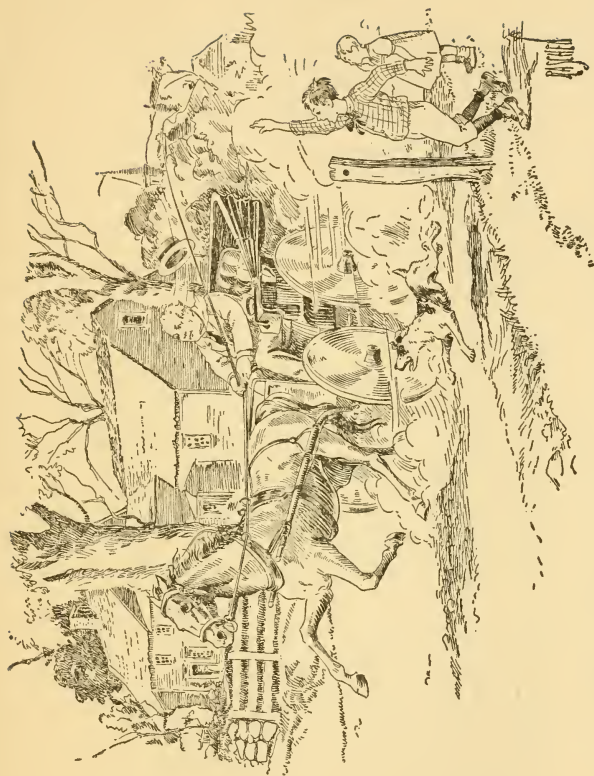
But when the magic of the moon
Jest sort o' sets your heart in tune
They circle round close to the girls,
Cut figure eights an' fancy whirls;
At first the girls pretend to act
Like they don't care, which ain't the fact;
Then pretty quick some fellow dares,
An' 'fore you know, they skate in pairs.

Most half the fellows pointed straight
Where I told Margy Jones to wait;
But when I see 'em headin' there
I scuttled through you bet for fair,
An' Margy 'n' I give them the slip
While Tubby Ford most turned a flip.—
We skated till it was 'bout ten,
An' promised we'd all come again.

DOC FORD

Doc Ford, why he's our Doc you know,
Lives 'cross the way an' down below,
'Bout half way from our farm to town
'N a big old house that's painted brown;
He's Tubby's Pa and Gladys' too,
But that don't count, although it's true;
And he belongs to Mrs. Ford,
Leastways he works there for his board.

He's ev'rybody's Doc 'round here,
An' has been for most thirty year;
There ain't a kid in our township
Doc didn't fetch in his old grip,—
At least that's what our Parunts say
When we ask questions 'bout the way
We came to town on our first trip—
They always blame it on Doc's grip.



YOU OUGHT TO SEE HOW DOC CAN DRIVE, IF SOMEONE'S HURT AND JUST ALIVE

Mostly Boy

When folks get sick they send for Doc
As reg'lar as they wind the clock;
An' some that ain't sick more than half
Send just the same to hear him laugh;
Ma says his laugh is worth the price
Although he charged you for it twice;
And yet Doc never stays away
If folks hain't got a cent to pay.

Doc's got a satchel that he fills
With 'bout a thousand kinds of pills,
That look like candy but taste—well
They taste more like a skunk can smell;
He's lots of little bottles too
Filled full of stuff that's green an' blue,
Like essences Ma puts in cake;
Doc says they're good for stomach-ache.

You ought to see how Doc can drive,
If someone's hurt and just alive;
Like when Bud White fell out a tree
An' almost broke his neck or knee;
Why Doc drove by our place so fast
You couldn't see him when he passed;
An' his straw hat blew off his top,
But you just bet Doc didn't stop.

Mostly Boy

Doc likes to argufy with Pa,
But he likes best to joke with Ma—
How she is growin' young an' slim,
Till she flares up an' fires at him,
An' tells him 'f he was smart as he
Likes to pretend folks thinks he be,
He'd be the smartest man by half
There is; then Doc—how he does laugh!

Gee, how he shocked old Deacon Small
When they both happened in to call;
Doc told the Deacon to his face
He disbelieved in the bad place;
Doc said he'd seen so much hell here
He didn't have a mite of fear
That God had made a worser place
In which to damn the human race.

This made the Deacon good an' mad,
An' he told Doc he bet he had
A first rate chance to soon find out
For he was travellin' on that route.
Doc laughed an' said he didn't care
So long as Deacon Small wa'n't there;
The Deacon couldn't see no joke,
An' so since then he hasn't spoke.

Mostly Boy

Doc says he likes plain common boys,
The full-bore kind that's primed with noise,
An' always goes off at half cock,
The best of anything, says Doc—
'Cept girls—an' dogs—an' his old pipe—
An' peaches when they're good an' ripe!
And then Doc grins an' gives a wink
Just like he knows what us kids think.—

I tell you what we'd just hooray
For old Doc Ford, most any day,
'Cause he is somehow just our style—
'Cept when he's givin' castor ile;
And if we kids could only vote
I'd bet for keeps Tub's billy goat,
If we all to election went
We'd 'lect Doc Ford for President!

A HUNTIN' TRIP

The grandest time I ever had
Was on a huntin' trip with Dad.—
We'd talked an' planned, an' planned an' talked
But every time some blame thing balked,
Until it seemed a million years,
An' I could scarce hold back my tears,
When Dad, one night said, "Tom, my son,
I've bought for you this bran' new gun!"

I give one reg'lar Injun whoop
An' turned a header off our stoop;
Dad kinda grinned, as if he would
Have done the same, 'f he only could;
Then Ma come out and said she'd scold
Unless we eat, 'fore things got cold;
I knew that supper was all right,
But I could scarcely eat a bite.

Dad told, while Ma kept his tea hot,
How he and Tubby's Pa had got
Things all laid out for us to go
As soon as the first fall of snow;
He said they would take Tub an' me,
Provided us kids could agree;
An' then Pa says, "Now can you Bub?"
I says, "'F we can't, then I'll lick Tub!"

Mostly Boy

That very night it howled an' blowed
An' 'long toward morning how it snowed!
When I crawled out, I thought there must
A giant's feather bed have bust,
An' scattered 'bout a million load
On every living thing that growed;—
Pa said we'd fix the double sleigh
And get things packed that very day.

As soon as I got breakfast floored
I headed straight for Tubby Ford;
So he could see my bran' new gun,
An' try it out just once in fun;
Then I went home an' helped Pa pack,
'Cause Ma said it most broke her back;
We'd boxes, cans, and bags an' sacks
Till our old bobs glued to their tracks.

Pa said we'd start 'long 'bout daylight,
For we must drive there sure by night;
And it was forty miles way back
To Big Moose Hill where was the shack
Some hunters built on a log lot,
An' then got kilt, or lost or shot,
Leastways they never did come back,
An' Tubby's Uncle bought the shack.

Mostly Boy

That night, I'd scarcely shut an eye,
'Fore I heard Dad go slipping by,
An' then 'fore half a minute passed,
He blew a reg'lar huntin' blast,
While I just tumbled out of bed,
Grabbed up my clothes an' downstairs sped,
Where Ma had breakfast pipin' hot,
An' you just bet it hit the spot!

While I was killin' my ninth cake
That slushed 'round in a syrup lake,
Doc Ford an' Tubby whooped her up,
Till Ma most dropped her coffee cup,
And said to Doc as they tramped in,
"You old fool, you scairt me like sin!"
Doc laughed an' said she mustn't tell
Or Mrs. Ford would give him—suthin'.

Then how we jumped an' flew around
Till everything at last got found.
Pa drove the horses to the door,
Ma kissed me once, and then some more;
While Pa an' Doc climbed on the seat
With Tub an' me tucked at their feet;—
The stars were shinin' in the sky;
Pa shook the lines, and called "Goodby!"

Mostly Boy

Both 'Tub an' me then yelled "Hooray!"
'Till our old team most jerked away,
An' Pa an' Doc both says, "Keep still,
Or you don't go to Big Moose Hill!"
It was so stingin' sharp an' cold
We shut like clams as we was told,
An' burrowed down deep in the hay,
An' took a nap till it got day.

We drove an' drove the whole day through
Till the last house lost out of view,
The road was just a dimmish track
Through great pine woods where 'twas so black
That Pa an' Doc could scarcely see
Where they should drive nor hit a tree;
So Doc he lit a lantern light
An' wondered 'f we was headed right.

Poor 'Tub an' me was starvin' fast,
Seein' we'd had just one repast,
When we come to a cleared up space,
An' Doc sings out, "Cheer up! 'S the place!"
An' bounced right out an' give three cheers
Just like a kid of 'bout ten years.
Pa didn't have to hollar "whoa"
For our old team just seemed to know.

Mostly Boy

There stood the shack as black as night,
Except the roof with snow was white;
There wa'n't no livin' thing in sight,
There didn't shine one lonesome light;
The trees like giants stood all 'round,
While stumps like ghosts stuck out the ground!
We didn't stop to look no more,
But steered right straight for that shack door.

Pa put the team in the log shed,
Unharnessed them, an' got 'em fed;
While Doc an' us went on inside
Where Doc just stuffed the fireplace wide
Until he couldn't stuff no more;
An' when Pa come, how it did roar!
Pa said that nothin' blazed so hot
As hick'ry logs with a pine knot.

Then Tub an' me, it seemed we must
Let loose a peg, or we'd sure bust;
We summersaulted on the bunks
Till Tub's Pa said he'd throw some chunks
'F we didn't get that table set,
An' then keep still till grub was eat;
When he said "grub," and we smelt it,
You bet your hat how quick we quit!

Mostly Boy

But say, Doc Ford knows how to cook,
And he don't need no rec'pe book!
There wa'n't much style to what he fixed,
An' things sometimes got sort o' mixed,
And wa'n't as clean as they might be,
But, gosh! I eat enough for three,
Till Pa says, "If you eat much more
You sure will have to sleep out door!"

When the last crumb had disappeared,
Doc stretched an' said he really feared
We kids would be most awful sick
Unless we washed them dishes quick,
While Pa 'sposed Doc sure ought to know
What's good for kids that had stuffed so.
'Course Tub an' me see through the joke—
How Pa an' Doc just had to smoke.

Now while we made our job look sick,
Doc fixed the fire up good an' slick,
Then pushed some seats close up before
An' we set down an' watched it roar,
Until it got so scorchin' hot
We all shoved back from where we sot;
Then Pa an' Doc swapped huntin' lies
Till Tub an' me shut up our eyes.

Mostly Boy

I don't know when we went to bed,
I was so tired I was 'most dead;
I got to dreamin' 'bout the bear
Doc said he killed, sometime, somewhere,
An' dreamed it caught me by a tree
Then squashed right down on top of me;
But when I woke you'd never guessed
'Twas Tubby snorin' cross my chest!

Next day was cold, but bright and clear,
Just right Doc said for trackin' deer.
We packed a bully big old lunch
An' then set out, all of our bunch,
And headed straight for Lost Loon Lake,
A sniffin' a hot venison steak;
We tramped an' sniffed the whole forenoon,
But not a glimpse of the Lost Loon.

Pa said he'd bet there's no such lake;
Doc swore their map was one big fake;
Right then it started in to snow;
Pa said look out for a big blow;
So we eat quick, an' then turned back,
Still lookin' for a bull moose track,
But spied some rabbits by a tree;
Doc shot, an' he popped over three.

Mostly Boy

Doc said that deer are awful tough,
But rabbit stew was just the stuff.
I bet we tramped 'fore we got back
More'n forty mile to our log shack,
An' there we see as plain as day
Five deer a feastin' on our hay;
Tub give a whoop, an' them deer run
Fore Pa an' Doc could raise a gun!—

I tell you 'twas the greatest fun
To start off with your lunch an' gun
An' tramp across the Big Moose Hills
A waitin' for them suddin' thrills,
Like when you see by some pond's brink
A bunch of deer sneak down to drink,
But 'fore you'd get a chance to shoot
Like arrows off them deer would scoot!

We didn't have much venison steak,
But when you'd tramped 'round Lost Loon Lake,
The snow a singin' through the trees,
An' you dead sure your nose would freeze,
I tell you that a rabbit stew
Was plenty good for me or you;
Or maybe just a partridge pie
That made you eat till you'd 'most die!

Mostly Boy

The evenings were the best of all,
Long when you'd hear some old wolf call,
As we set 'round the big fireplace,
Its light a dancin' on each face,
The wind a howlin' 'round the shack,
Our hick'ry logs a roarin' back;
While Pa an' Doc would stories swap
Until our hearts would almost stop!—

One day, Doc vowed a deer he'd shoot
Or eat that night his biggest boot;
Pa said you bet they'd eat boot cake
Or have for supper venison steak.
'Course Tub an' me they'd not let go;
'Twould be too far, or it might snow;
An' then for two such common boys
We'd made a blame sight too much noise!

They started off while we staid back
And puttered 'round our old log shack,
Until our dinner we had eat,
When I said, "Tub, we'll beat 'em yet!"
We got our guns an' started out
Down toward the creek where we saw trout,
But didn't find a single track
Until we got most half way back.

Mostly Boy

As we was crossin' Cedar Brook,
We saw a buck stop quick, an' look;
'Fore you could wink, we'd both let go
An' dropped that buck right in the snow;
At first we couldn't make a sound,
'Twas like a knockout the first round;
Then we let loose an Injun yell
An' legged it where that deer had fell!

'Twas dark long 'fore our Pas got back;
(We'd hung the buck behind the shack)
The only game them hunters had
Was two red squirrels shot by Dad!
We said we 'sposed some nice boot stew
Was 'bout what they was comin' to;
Then led 'em round where hung our deer;
They gasped, then, gee, how they did cheer!—

I tell you that was venison steak!
Gosh, how we eat! I thought 'twould take
Most the whole deer, way we did stuff;
Doc groaned his clothes wa'n't big enough.—
Next morning it was clear an' still,
As we goodbyed to Big Moose Hill
An' the best time I ever had
A huntin' with Doc Ford an' Dad!

L'ENVOI

THE VANGUARD OF YOUTH

With a rat a tat tat, and a tummy tum tum,
With the screech of a fife, and the boom of a drum,
With a whoop and hooray, all armed for the fray,
March a million of boys, a wild bedlam of noise:—
'Tis the Vanguard of Youth, as onward they come!

They come from the alley, its filth and its slime,
They come from the street, its dirt and its grime,
They come from huge mansions, all plastered with
gold,
They come from dark hovels, all cheerless and cold,
They come from prairies, with flowers all abloom,
They come from great cities with smoke all agloom,
They come from fair valleys with sunlight ablaze,
They come from grim mountains that loom through
the haze.

Mostly Boy

With a rat a tat tat, and a tummy tum tum,
With the screech of a fife, and the boom of a drum,
With a whoop and hooray, all armed for the fray,
March a million of boys, a wild bedlam of noise:—
'Tis the Men of To-morrow, as onward they come!

Some are clad like the Prince in the old fairy tale,
Some shiver in rags and are hungry and pale,
Some are shod with pure gold as they race down the
street,

While others lack shoes to warm their bare feet:—
But their eyes are afire with mischief and fun,
Their hearts are athrob with deeds to be done,
Their hopes are aglow with visions of truth,
And their faith is aflame with the rapture of youth!

With a rat a tat tat, and a tummy tum tum,
With the screech of a fife, and the boom of a drum,
With a whoop and hooray, all armed for the fray,
March a million of boys, a wild bedlam of noise:—
'Tis the Hopes of the Future, as onward they come!

Say, how shall we meet 'em, Oh, how shall we greet
'em;

As chattels or humans, ay, how shall we treat 'em?
Shall we measure and weigh 'em, impassive survey
'em,

Mostly Boy

As we draw a straight line with a piece of white
chalk,
And say to these boys "Down this you must walk!"
Compel them to walk, when they're aching to run,
As sober as deacons—when brimming with fun?
Shall we clamp down the lid on these bombshells of
noise,
And make bitter old men of these millions of boys?

With a rat a tat tat, and a tumpty tum tum,
With the screech of a fife, and the boom of a drum,
With a whoop and hooray, all armed for the fray,
March a million of boys, a wild bedlam of noise:—
'Tis the Souls we have lost, that back to us come!

Oh, let us forget the blight of the years
With its tales of defeat, and its drama of tears,
Forget the deep furrows disaster has ploughed,
Forget the gray hair that we wear as a shroud;
Let us fling to the winds our cloak of false pride
With the frauds and the shams that we call dig-
nified;

Then let us recall it was only last night
That we dreamed of a future surpassingly bright,
Remember 'twas only the morning before
That we stood as a boy at Youth's open door!

Mostly Boy

With a rat a tat tat, and a tumpy tum tum,
With the screech of a fife, and the boom of a drum,
With a whoop and hooray, all armed for the fray,
March a million of boys, a wild bedlam of noise:—
'Tis the Vanguard of Youth, as onward they come!

Come on, let us meet 'em, as boys meet with boys,
We will join in their play, we will add to their
noise,
We'll forget for all time the strict rule of thumb,
While the Scold shall be silenced, and the Shrew
stricken dumb;
Then their eyes shall still burn with mischief and
fun,
Then their hearts shall still throb with brave deeds
to be done,
Then their hopes shall still glow with new visions of
truth,
And their faith shall still flame with the rapture of
Youth!

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